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P.F.EYE TOLD YOU SO

"SO JUST as the 40 percent rule is about to be broken, it could be conveniently scrapped", reported the *Eye* in April last year (issue 1182). Now, the *FT* reveals, Treasury officials are indeed "working privately on plans to reform Gordon Brown's fiscal rules with a new framework that would initially allow for increased borrowing [above the existing 40 percent of gross domestic product limit]".

The problem last year was that tens of billions of PFI liabilities were due to come on to the government's books under new international accounting rules. These have been conveniently deferred until next financial year but couldn't be put off forever. So the rule has to be scrapped, but how to justify it?

Every cloud has a silver lining and a looming recession gives just the reason to call an end to Brown's most flexible of friends, the "economic cycle". Hey, presto! For a new cycle completely different fiscal rules will be required and the old ones will never have been broken.

As the old rules retire, expect plenty of guff about how they have served the economy well but now's time for a change. Their real legacy will be to have forced around £200bn of future spending into the private finance initiative just so commitments could be kept off the books. Enormous waste and hare-brained ideas such as privatising defence training are the result – *See Metrix reloaded, In the Back, p27.*

NUMBER CRUNCHING

350,000 Pupils who will not get their English SAT results on time thanks to cock-ups by markers ETS

£330,000 Pay-packet of Ken Boston, QCA boss responsible for giving marking contract to ETS

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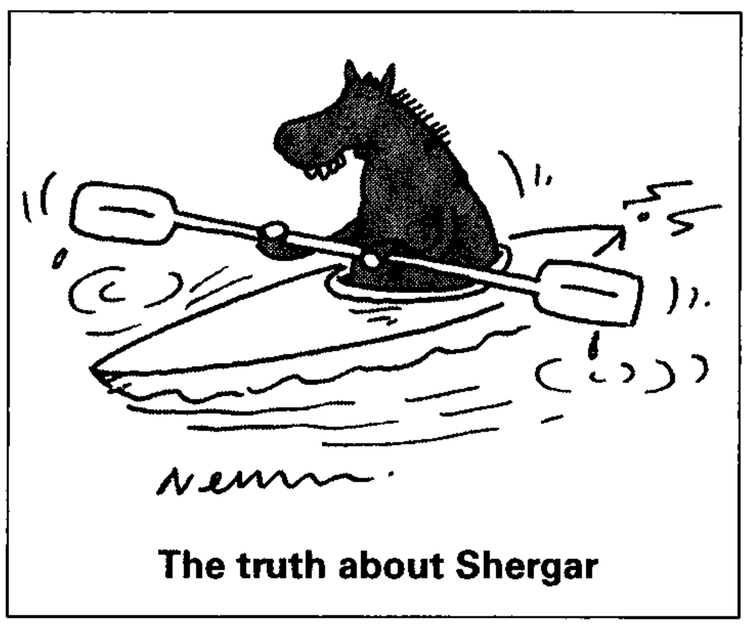
ABC

"IF FOOD production in Africa and elsewhere in the developing world reached its potential, global food output would be much higher, far fewer people would go hungry and the threat of food-related political and social instability around the world would recede." So declared prime minister Gordon Brown, launching his review of food policy en route to the G8 beano in Japan a fortnight ago.

The *Eye* has already highlighted the contribution of Britain's publicly-owned international development fund CDC, formerly the Commonwealth Development Corporation, to the problem. In 1999 it had £300m invested in "agribusiness" in the developing world; by 2007 this had fallen to £80m, with just £25m of that in Africa (down £10m on the previous year). But why this devastating abandonment of third world food production? – *See "Hungry for profit", In the Back, page 26.*



The truth about Shergar

INSPECTOR KNACKER of Northumbria has found a novel way to avoid the furore surrounding knife crime: call a stabbing an "assault" and don't mention a wound or weapon.

In one case in South Shields, when a man was stabbed and left critically ill, the force told local hacks that he had suffered a "chest injury" following an assault. Two days later, officers tried a similar trick when a man suffered multiple stab wounds.

The reason? Apparently senior officers are under orders to tackle "fear of crime" – in other words to play it down, no matter how ghastly the event. Thus the murder of two men in a Sunderland bedsit in which one victim received more than 100 injuries was described as an "isolated incident" by a spokesman. When another man was stabbed to death tackling a gang outside his house in Sunderland, a superintendent told media that such attacks were "rare". Northumbria "does not have a knife culture," she said.

Really? A freedom of information request later showed that the force had the fourth worst record in the country for knife crime. In the first three months of this year, there were 361 incidents involving knives – over 100 more than at the beginning of last year.

Keen to pump out propaganda about "falling crime", Chief Constable Mike Craik has increased spending on his PR department from £620,000 to £1m in just two years – money that might perhaps be better spent tackling knife crime.

WHY does David Cameron think he resembles video-game heroine Lara Croft?

"There is an element to politics that is a bit like Tomb Raider," the Conservative leader told the *Guardian* last week. "Until you have cleared level one, which I have incidentally never done, you cannot get on to level two. Level one is: are you a reasonable, decent, non-discriminating, sensible, practical person who understands the world as it is lived today, who wants to live in a modern world and who accepts what that means? If so, then you can move on to level two, where you can talk about some of the difficult issues about families and about responsibilities which can lead to trouble."

And in what other ways might he resemble the Tomb Raider star?

Although she doesn't like to boast about it, Lara Croft is in fact (or rather fiction) also the Countess of Abingdon, daughter of the 10th Earl. Her life was summed up in the tagline to the 2001 film starring Angelina Jolie: "Born into wealth. Groomed by the elite. Trained for combat."

THE last-minute shambles surrounding publication of the long-awaited Youth Crime Action Plan last week was another example of Gordon Brown's unique style of policy-by-panic.

Despite the complexity of the causes of youth crime and dealing with young offenders, and despite the plan being many months in the preparation, a final draft of the 81-page document was still doing the rounds only 24 hours before it was due to be launched. Insiders suggest that changes relating to the plans to evict parents of persistent young offenders were inserted at the 11th hour, with experts being given all of 90 minutes to respond.

Brown himself pulled out of a launch of the plan in north London after home secretary Jacqui Smith's announcement that thugs would be sent into A&E departments backfired when doctors and victims of crime pointed out that saving lives and recovery might be more of a priority in hospitals. Instead of the planned first big "law and order" speech by the prime minister, he answered questions on the plan at his monthly news conference instead.

As one might expect from policy made by rabbits in headlights, the plan was a hotchpotch. What is clear, though, is that "tough" justice minister Jack Straw has finally won the turf war with "soft" children's secretary Ed Balls.

While the youth plan contains some well-thought-through details for crime prevention through early intervention and support, the devil is in the resources to be made available. Napo, the probation officers' union, has calculated that even if the entire £100m set aside for the plan over three years were given to the 20,000 problem families identified by ministers as being in need of "intensive" support, it would amount to £1,700 per family per year – or one visit a week by a social worker. In reality they won't get a fraction of that.

Street of Shame

BRITISH army bosses are considering a boot camp for journalists hoping to report from Afghanistan after a disastrous visit by a group of Scottish hacks left three seeking hospital treatment and one needing airborne rescue after she suffered a heart attack.

Magnus Linklater from the *Times*, Ian Rutherford and Emma Cowing from the *Scotsman* and Alison Campsie from the *Herald* all put heavy demands on already overstretched resources as they went down like dominoes in the 50° heat. By the time they reached their destination of Musa Qala, Rutherford had already been struck down and the 66-year-old Linklater quickly followed, admitting in a later article that he had needed rehydrating and was even fanned by a "latter-day punkah-wallah" – a soldier armed with a sheet of cardboard. He and Rutherford spent the next few days in and out of the medical officer's facilities.

Although Cowing was already sweating profusely, she insisted on joining a shortened patrol laid on for the remaining hacks. After 20 minutes she collapsed and troops from the US Marines had to put their own lives at risk, abandoning checks for roadside bombs as they loaded her into an armoured vehicle and took her back to camp.

A Chinook was flown in from Camp Bastion to land at Musa Qala to rescue Cowing, even though the site has been considered highly dangerous since a helicopter landing there came under heavy attack from the Taliban. While the medics inside resuscitated Cowing, the helicopter zigzagged to avoid Taliban rockets.

Having cost the MoD tens of thousands of pounds and placed British and American troops in mortal danger, the hacks admitted they were, er, ill-prepared. Linklater wrote that he had "learnt a stiff lesson about severe heat and what it can do to the human body".

Campsie, meanwhile, confined herself to understatement in her blog from Helmand: "None of us had anticipated just how hard a job this was going to be."

FOLLOWING the savage murder of French students Laurent Bonomo and Gabriel Férez in London, the *Daily Mail* sent reporter Sam Greenhill and a photographer to the Auvergne to spend a few days doorstepping friends and relatives of the pair.

"We want to build up a picture of their lives, of their pasts," Greenhill told locals. But he was forced to admit that "nothing I've found out makes me think that there's any kind of link between their lives in France and their deaths".

Hardly surprising – partly because police have at no point suggested there might be, and partly because, despite happily posing for a photograph in which he intently pored over local paper *La Montagne*, Greenhill, as the paper revealed, "ne parle pas un mot de français".

NEWS from the *Daily Mail*'s lavish summer party in the grounds of Hampton Court Palace. In his speech to the troops, editor Paul Dacre did a remarkable about-turn as he tried to claw back from a declaration he made at an earlier summer do.

Back in 1999, Dacre infamously told staff: "A lot of people say that the internet is the future for newspapers. Well, I say bullshit.com."

Surprisingly, at this year's event he made no reference to his earlier piece of wisdom. Instead he told his audience that the *Daily Mail* website was now the leading newspaper site for hits per day – a statement which drew huge roars of applause from the assembled orcs.

SPANKING JOURNALISM

THE Max Mosley spanking case has been a textbook illustration of how the *News of the World* and its seedy chief reporter Neville Thurlbeck go about their business.

The court heard how "Woman E", the *NoW*'s no-show "star-witness", had only received £12,000 for secretly filming the S&M "orgy", having been promised £25,000.

When Mosley's QC, James Price, suggested to *NoW* editor Colin Myler that the dominatrix had been short-changed because the footage was too tame, containing insufficient "Nazi" material, Myler set him right. It was the newspaper's standard practice, he told the court, to renege on its deals with informants: "Every fee is renegotiated… we negotiate just as in any other business deal. We are in a credit crunch, Mr Price."

As *Eye* readers well know, the *News of the Screws* has been cheating its informants for years. As the late Paul Foot wrote in 1997: "The supreme art of chequebook journalism is to buy a story, print it – and then refuse to pay for it." In *Eye* 931 Foot told how Thurlbeck, the *NoW* hack at the centre of the Mosley case, had ingratiated himself with Colin Stagg, the man acquitted of the murder of Rachel Nickell on Wimbledon Common in 1992, and persuaded Stagg to sell his story to the *Screws* for £20,000, under the influence of a "truth drug".

Stagg happily signed a contract agreeing that no monies would be paid if his revelations confirmed "that he carried out the killing or lied on oath or to police". Stagg's story confirmed no such thing – because he was completely innocent (another man has since been charged with the murder and will go on trial on 11 November). But the *NoW* seized on a minor discrepancy in Stagg's account, splashed with the headline "I LIED ABOUT RACHEL", and refused to cough up a penny.

If the Stagg stunt was classic Thurlbeck, so too was the story the *Eye* ran 10 years ago revealing how the hack had persuaded a couple who ran a naturist B&B to let him watch them having sex and paid them £75 (*Eye* 962).

The couple, Bob and Sue Firth, sent us a recording and video stills of Thurlbeck at work to get their own back for a *NoW* story which falsely portrayed their oddball guesthouse, where *Health and Efficiency* readers went to take the Dorset air, as a rural brothel: "The guest house where all rooms come with en-suite pervert. Owner hides in the wardrobe to watch men bed wife for cash."

Thurlbeck's story claimed that landlady Sue had offered him " a full sex session with me and my husband Bob for £75". The hack – writing under the pseudonym "Jack Tunstall" because his wife was embarrassed to see his byline on sex stories – claimed to have declined the offer. Alas, the tape proved that, as in many Thurlbeck stories, the truth was rather different.

The hack came up with the idea that Bob and Sue should have sex with each other for £75 – and that he would watch. He would have got away with the subsequent distortion in the *News of the World* if the actual sequence of events had not been recorded on a security video, which caught the sleazy hack with his trousers, ahem, down.

The incident was even referred to in the House of Commons on 9 June 1999 when MP George Galloway described how Thurlbeck had "bribed Bob and Sue into allowing him to indulge in a rather pathetic act of onanism at the foot of their bed". What a way to earn a living!

PS: Regarding *News of the World* rip-offs, last year *Eye* 1177 told how the rag beat off rivals for the story of Iraq veteran Justin Smith, who had confronted Tony Blair on TV about the treatment of war veterans. Smith, who had been medically discharged with traumatic stress disorder and was living in damp temporary accommodation with his wife and three young children, turned down offers of £6,000 from the *Daily Mail* and £10,000 from the *Sun* after the *NoW* offered him £15,000 – which would have transformed his family's circumstances. After telling his story to the *NoW*, however, he was told it wasn't worth £15,000 after all, and that the paper would pay just £1,000. Smith's wife Paula told the *Eye*: "They only made that offer to get rid of the others. Maybe they never intended to pay it. They are really, really shitty people." Colin Myler, take a bow!

WHEN the *Indy* needed to make more redundancies, management cast its eye around the newsroom for likely candidates. It alighted on the athletics correspondents for the daily and Sunday papers. Surely there was no need to have one for each paper? Mike Rowbottom, the *Indy*'s long-serving trackside correspondent, offered to be the one to take redundancy.

It didn't seem to occur to the powers that be that the Beijing Games are almost upon us and that the build-up to the 2012 London Olympics will mean any self-respecting newspaper will want lots of athletics scoops about our Olympic prospects in the coming years. Luckily Rowbottom has agreed to stay on to cover Beijing, so the *Indy*'s blushes will be spared – for now.

Meanwhile Roger Alton continues to make an impression in his first month as editor. In the past fortnight his front pages have included teasers for "The mysteries of Madonna's marriage", "It's a boy and girl for Brangelina", "To bare or not to bare? The cleavage debate" and "Sex and Seniors – they've never had it so good". As one newsroom insider put it: "It's all a long way from saving the planet."

"EVIDENCE of the growing scale of cocaine being taken in London bars and clubs is revealed today," fretted the *Evening Standard* on 9 July, after council officials' tests in Kensington & Chelsea found traces of cocaine in 38 out of 41 establishments.

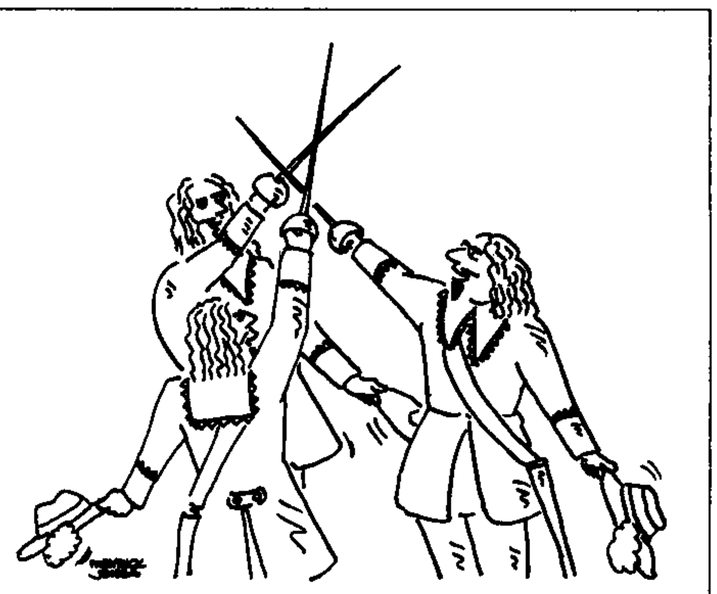
"The first premises was Archangel, a bar and nightclub in Kensington High Street, where officers found evidence of substance abuse in every lavatory in which they carried out tests."

For some reason the article omitted to mention that Archangel, a minute's walk from the newspaper's offices, is regularly frequented by a gaggle of young hacks from… the *Evening Standard*!

"PERVS prey on dating teens," shrieked the *Sun* last week over news that innocent teenagers had "posted pictures of themselves posing in their underwear… unaware that adult sex offenders are around looking for a child to groom."

Meanwhile, elsewhere on the *Sun*'s website, priapic showbiz columnist Gordon Smart had a new young lovely in his sights. "PIXIE GELDOF's quirky clothes and customised roller-skates were not the only things standing out from the crowd at a roller disco," he frothed. "The cheeky but cheerful madam must have got dressed in a hurry and forgot to put on a bra. SEE OUR SLIDESHOW: Bob's girl drinks underage, smokes and flashes her bra in public."

Pixie Geldof is 17. Gordon Smart is nearly 30, and married.



"Three for the price of two"

A NEW scam in the world of advertorials is the use of a newspaper's journalists to take part in "health experiments". The familiar by-lines mean the reader is much less likely to realise they are reading a promotion.

Take the recent health page in the *Daily Torygraph* which began with a serious piece about the effects of cholesterol and finished with four of the paper's hacks agreeing to incorporate Flora pro.activ products into their diet to see what effect it has on their cholesterol.

A minimal notice on the edge of the piece informed readers this was being done "in association with Flora pro.activ". To make matters worse, the Flora challenge will be combined with healthier eating and an exercise regime so it will be impossible to tell if the Flora products helped lower cholesterol or not.

Meanwhile at the *Observer*, things are even more blatant. One of its recent supplements was entitled *The Observer Health Magazine* which looked exactly like the paper's other magazines – Women, Music, Food – except for the (small) notice that this one was being sponsored by Nintendo's Wii Fit. Inside, a double page spread advertisement saw two *Observer* journalists and their families test-drive the Nintendo Wii with exceptionally positive results. Step forward *Observer Music Monthly* editor Caspar Llewellyn Smith and family, along with arts and media correspondent Vanessa Thorpe with hers and hubby Martin Bright, the *New Statesman*'s political editor!

"NESTLED next to Chelsea FC's home ground at Stamford Bridge, Marco is the perfect venue to enjoy fine cuisine and escape the West End crowds." So enthused Sujit Jasani on 11 July in industry mag *PR Week*.

Jasani was reviewing new restaurant Marco, a joint venture between restaurateur Marco Pierre White and Chelsea owner Roman Abramovich. But he is not a restaurant critic. He is, in fact, account director for Pitch PR, a "sports PR and sponsorship activation agency".

Why Jasani's move into restaurant reviews? Perhaps because for the past year Pitch PR has been employed to promote the "non-football business interests" of one Chelsea Football Club.

SO. Farewell then the News International library, the latest department James Murdoch has decided can be got rid of along with its 25 staff, most of whom will be made redundant.

Instead, journalists on the *Times, Sunday Times, Sun* and *News of the World* will be "encouraged to make use of" the online database of the Newspaper Licensing Association.

One man who is keeping his job in Wapping – in fact, he has just been promoted, from editorial services director to director of group publishing services – is Dominic Young. And that's not his only job, either – he also happens to be non-executive chairman of… the Newspaper Licensing Association!

HACKWATCH: THE CREDIT CRUNCH BUNCH

AS inflation continues to rocket, corpses go unburied in the streets thanks to the three-day week and Hoovervilles spring up on the fringes of most of Britain's major cities, Fleet Street has been quick to offer a range of money-saving tips guaranteed to claw back nearly half the money readers spend on their daily newspaper.

22 April: "Not very long ago, it was commonly dismissed as a minority interest for eco-eccentrics and crumbly old allotment holders." No, not the *Guardian*, stoopid – "growing your own vegetables", which the paper has discovered is the Hot New Thing. "Concern for the environment, worries about healthy eating and the credit crunch have led to packets of veg seeds flying off the racks."

17 May: "How can the so-called Coping Classes continue to cope?" wails Niki Chewsworth in the *Daily Telegraph*. "Fees for private sector schools are rising by an average of more than 13 percent." The solution? "Pay fees a year in advance, there will often be a discount, and send all children to the same school – there is often a fee reduction for siblings."

6 June: The most expensive thing you can bring into your home is a child. But don't waste money finding out if you're going to have one, suggests the *Daily Mirror*'s newly-appointed "Credit Crunch Crusader". "Don't buy branded pregnancy or ovulation tests, get them online for as little as 62p for an unbranded test."

8 June: "Hard-up punters are flocking to strip clubs – to get their minds off the credit crunch," reveals the *Daily Star on Sunday*. "With the price of everything from food to fuel to mortgages spiralling upwards, most 'luxuries' are being put on hold. But, we can reveal, strip venues and lapdance clubs have seen an astonishing rise in business. Experts reckon it's because gorgeous girls like sexy Destiny, Gabriella and Kamarie (pictured) can help lift the gloom for miserable fellas." The experts themselves are not pictured.

14 June: The *Guardian* offers *The How To Save Money Guide To Personal Finance*, which includes the following handy tip – "If you fill in a tax return, make sure it arrives present and correct before the 31 January deadline (31 October if you file online)." That will save you, er, minus £100 pounds in the form of an automatic penalty, as the paper acknowledges a few days later: "Those dates should have been reversed."

15 June: Too poor to eat? Look on the bright side – you'll be thin, points out the *News of the World*'s "Fabulous" magazine. "We bring you the Credit Crunch Diet – eight simple ways to help you lose a stack of weight and save up to £ 2,000 in a year."

19 June: The *Sun* rifles through old copies of *Viz* to bring readers some Top Tips – "33 ways to beat inflation at 3.3%". "Stick tights or stockings in the ice compartment of your fridge overnight – it helps them last longer… Mayonnaise is a fine hair conditioner, adding shine… Watch telly in bed in the dark. You'll save on heating and lighting costs and if there's a sexy show on, you might even get a bonus cuddle from your partner."

25 June: As holidays loom, how can you entertain your kids on the cheap? "As co-author of the newly published *Seven Ways To Successful Parenting*, Georgia Coleridge should know something about filling school holidays," notes *Country Life*. "I catch her as she walks, soggily, across a field towards an Eton Fourth of June. 'The best thing they've done recently,' she says of her four children, aged from nine to 17, 'is build a tree-house… it's surprisingly cheap and thrillingly dangerous'."

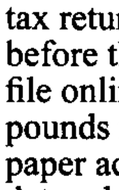
5 July: There's a new superhero in town. "Captain Crunch, the *Sun*'s new superhero, has landed on Earth from the planet Frugal… Every week he will bring you the best supermarket deals and money-off vouchers and give a huge £1,000 to the most deserving reader." He appears to be a close relative of Captain Cash, who hung up his cape in the *News of the World* when times were good back in 2005. His advice to impecunious readers appears every Saturday – when the *Sun* costs 55p, as opposed to 35p on weekdays (or just 25p in London and Scotland – perhaps the Captain should suggest readers move house?).

6 July: John-Paul Flintoff reveals in the *Sunday Times* how "the middle class is finding thrift can be fun." Why, he recently visited www.thescytheshop.co.uk to find an amusing way of cutting the grass on his allotment. Other friends have also "discovered their inner peasant" – a chic friend informs him that "'Darned jeans, and the fact that your winter coat is clearly something tarted up from Oxfam, has cachet'."

9 July: "WIN this £330,000 dream cottage!" shrieks the front page of the *Daily Mail*. Alas, nowhere is safe from the house price slump predicted in the paper for so long. "Win a £300,000 dream cottage" the paper offers just two days later.

17 July: "My heart goes out to those who are facing this bleakness for the first time," sobs Max Hastings in the *Mail*, recalling the days when he couldn't rely on regular large cheques for churning out drivel like this. "I was so broke in the 1970s recession that I had to sell some cherished treasures… I still sometimes wonder how I would have got out of my own hole, had not my income risen sharply at a time when school fees were hurting most."

17 July: "Beat supermarket prices by growing your own lunch." Advises who? "Sky News Presenter Kay Burley", who tells *Sun* readers of how "I did my bit to cut food bills at home, reduce my blood pressure and burn calories at the same time." That would be the same Burley who boasted of her most recent Sky contract that "my pay's gone up and I get a generous dress allowance. It's much more than the other channels can afford to pay me." Needs must.



Curse of Gnome

IT IS five years since football agent Paul Stretford tried (unsuccessfully) to win £50,000 libel damages from the *Eye*.

In recent years his energies have been directed against the Football Association which wanted to discipline him for breaking its rules. But now the FA's case has come to fruition and Stretford has been fined £300,000 and banned from working as a football agent for 18 months.

A disciplinary commission investigated the FA's charges which related to how Stretford had won the right to represent Wayne Rooney back in 2002. The commission found him guilty of seven out of the nine charges made against him including improper conduct in the "making of false and/or misleading witness statements to police and giving false and/or misleading testimony to Warrington Crown Court" during a court case which examined how Rooney came to join Stretford's agency, Proactive Sports Management.

That case saw charges of blackmail brought against three men including an associate of Rooney's first agent, Peter McIntosh. But the trial collapsed when documents emerged that questioned the veracity of Stretford's evidence.

Other charges the FA successfully brought against Stretford include failing to protect Rooney's interests, failing to respect the rights of third parties and entering into a contract with Rooney for eight years (when the limit is set at two years).

DUMBING DOWN

RECALLING NEWS OF PAULA YATES'S FIRST PREGNANCY – "I told her that I subscribed to the Evelyn War School of Fatherhood."

– *The* Observer Magazine*'s "Did I Say That?" column about Bob Geldof, 13 July. Don't mention the Waugh...*

DAVID Cameron's announcement that the Tories might even have to raise taxes if things are really bad when they are elected shook traditionalists. But it's not all bad news on the tax front.

Shadow chancellor George Osborne's latest entry on the register of members' interests reveals that one of the firms supporting his shadow Treasury team is Smith & Williamson, a company with a lot of expertise in… tax.

Smith & Williamson specialises in finding "tax-efficient solutions" and has a whole department dedicated to "tax mitigation". It advises clients how to "shelter the three main taxes – income tax, capital gains tax and inheritance tax", and is a dab hand at setting up foreign entities to help with "overseas tax minimisation".

So while the little people will have to go on paying tax under the Tories, those who can afford the advisers' fees will have ever more opportunity to "mitigate", "minimise", "shelter" or otherwise avoid their pesky taxes.

"I DON'T miss my previous life at all," announced Derek Draper, disgraced "new" Labour insider-turned-psychotherapist, in 2002. "Four years as aide to Peter Mandelson and then my lobbying debacle cured me of my wish to live the political high life."

He was just as emphatic a year later. "All I want to do is be a good therapist," he told the *Observer*. "There is not a single cell in my body that wants to go back into politics."

In 2004 he admitted to the *Mail on Sunday* that "the big test for me will be when Tony Blair resigns and Gordon Brown, who I once worked for a great deal, is fighting for the crown. It would be easy to dabble in a bit of spin doctoring, but however torn my intellect may be, I should trust my instincts. The very idea of it makes me feel nauseous."

Having demonstrated his complete lack of interest in Westminster over the past year with regular political columns for the *Guardian*'s website, conference punditry on behalf of *Newsnight*, *The Daily Politics* and Sky News, and reviews of Cherie Blair and Alastair Campbell's books for the *Telegraph* and *Observer* – decrying in the latter how Labour's quest had "ceased to be a moral crusade and became a marketing campaign" – it was last week announced that Draper would take a job alongside new "new" Labour general-secretary Ray Collins.

His role? "Giving advice on how the party should communicate its message and organise its campaign."

LOBBYING firm Bell Pottinger doesn't seem too fussy about its clients – they include unlovely Alexander Lukashenko, ruler of Belarus and Europe's last dictator (see *Eye* 1208) – but it does like top-drawer staff.

Last November Bell Pottinger Sans Frontieres, its oddly named international arm, took on the foreign office's "director general (defence & intelligence)", David Richmond, a month after his retirement. The Advisory Committee on Business Appointments cleared his new job unconditionally.

Richmond was involved in the highest level of security policy at the foreign office, including flying out for secret talks on intelligence with Pakistani and Egyptian ministers and discussions with the Americans over who stays in Guantanamo Bay. The fact that such a senior figure is now available for hire to "government, political and corporate clients in North and South America, Europe, Russia and the Caucasus, the Middle East and Africa" is a coup for Bell Pottinger.

The firm may be especially interested in Richmond because he was also British ambassador to Iraq. It has had some lucrative "reconstruction" contracts there, including promoting the 2005 constitution, and it represents the "Trade Bank of Iraq", the western-backed financial institution set up to manage the country's commercial relations.

NO MATTER which party wins the Glasgow East by-election on 24 July, the power in Scotland continues to lie elsewhere.

Take transport, for example. The SNP had intended to re-regulate Scotland's buses, which provide publicly-funded public services. But just before the party took control of the Scottish parliament, it received a handy £500,000 donation from Stagecoach boss Brian Souter and promptly dropped the idea (*Eye* 1199).

Now that Labour is safely in opposition, Labour MSP Charlie Gordon is the one pushing for re-regulation of Scottish buses. However, he seems clear-sighted about his chances. He told the *Sunday Herald*: "I think it is inconceivable that Brian Souter would agree to it."

CALLED TO ORDURE

TORY backbenchers Sir Nicholas and Lady Winterton (he is MP for Macclesfield, she for Congleton) were found last month to have broken parliamentary rules on housing allowances. The gruesome twosome claimed £165,000 in expenses on a £700,000 London flat whose mortgage they had already paid off in full. Using a Commons loophole they set up a family trust, charged the Commons for their rent and in the process avoided their exposure to inheritance tax by up to £280,000. Fancy footwork!

The standards and privileges committee took a dim view, though in the softest possible way (Sir Nicholas, a friend of the Speaker, is one of those senior MPs paid thousands of pounds extra to chair debates in Westminster Hall).

Meanwhile in the past month the Wintertons – whose lucrative Commons career might now be in jeopardy – have been busy in the Commons chamber…

1 July: Both Sir Nicholas and Lady W co-sponsor a private members' bill by a fellow Tory, Nigel Evans. The bill demands "more transparent taxation" on shop receipts. But why stop there? Would "more transparent taxation" not be an equally good idea with MPs who set up sophisticated trusts and avoid death duties?

3 July: David Cameron and other Tory modernisers vote no to a salary increase for MPs but both Wintertons enthusiastically support the idea of a pay rise. The move is defeated by 123 to 224 votes, no thanks to the cash-hungry Wintertons.

On the same day, Sir Nicholas speaks in a debate on Zimbabwe and has stern words as world leaders gather for the G8 summit. The G8 should deliver a "stinging rebuke" to President Mbeki of South Africa and remind him about "upholding good governance" in southern Africa. No doubt Mr Mbeki will quake at this rebuke from a British politician with his own distinctive standards of "good governance".

Sir Nicholas also makes a contribution to a debate on post offices. "Why should profitable enterprises be closed?" he demands, showing impressive solidarity with another part of the public sector which sucks thousands of pounds from the state.

7 July: Lady Winterton is worried about the elderly. She speaks with moist sincerity about "pensioners who face dramatically increased costs". Can she be thinking of the plight of a 70-year-old Tory knight and his 67-year-old wife whose long cruise on the government gravy boat has just come to an end?

Sir Nicholas also speaks up for old people. "I am concerned about the elderly who need to use public transport," he explains. "The system is so complicated that they do not understand how to go through it." Not unless they have good accountants.

10 July: Sir Nicholas wades into a discussion of the Commons modernisation committee. He is dismayed that it has spent "a huge sum of money – more than £2.25m" after some controversial decision. "Apparently, we can find that amount quite easily, even though many other desirable projects cannot be resourced," splutters Sir Nicholas. What can he be thinking of? More generous housing allowances for MPs?

14 July: House of Lords reform is troubling Sir Nicholas. He seeks assurances as to the "skills, qualifications and life experience" of future peers. "Will the House of Lords control its own timetable — something that gives it the ability and authority to hold the government to account and, unlike this place, properly to scrutinise legislation?" Oh dear. One of the main arguments MPs use when justifying fat pay rises is that they do vital work in the public interest. If he thinks they fail to scrutinise legislation, do they truly deserve a pay rise?

15 July: Again finding himself called to contribute by his mate Speaker Martin, Sir Nicholas expresses indignant opposition to new court fees. These higher charges will, among other things, allow the government to pay lawyers a slightly higher wage. Increased public spending on MPs is one thing, it seems, but on court officials and barristers it is quite a different matter.

16 July: The Commons holds another debate on MPs' allowances. David Cameron's Tory party tries to put a stop to the "John Lewis list" arrangement which permits members to pillage vast sums for furniture, fittings etc in their second homes.

Sir Nicholas has been in the Commons earlier in the day – he is seen nodding piously at PMQs when Gordon Brown demands greater honesty from MPs about their expenses. But when it comes to the vote on MPs' expenses, even though it is an opposition day debate, there is no sign of Sir Nick or his Lady.

'Gavel Basher'

WHEN culture minister Margaret Hodge was the guest on a recent edition of Radio 3's *Private Passions*, she revealed that one of her favourite tunes was Joan Baez's anti-war song, *Last Night I Had the Strangest Dream*.

The song made the Barking MP remember her early political days in CND. "It's a song that we sing when we have our family get-togethers," Hodge added fondly. Perhaps its rousing anti-war lyrics slipped her mind when she voted for the war in Iraq and later voted against investigating the war?

"What do you mean you can start straight away because you haven't got any other jobs anywhere else...?!"

JUST a week before the Nuclear Management Partners consortium won its £1.3bn-a-year contract to clean up Sellafield, its members bought tickets to hear John Hutton, the minister in charge of nuclear, speak at a fundraising dinner put on by the Labour Party in Copeland, the constituency home of the Sellafield plant.

Hutton's office said there was no possibility of this influencing who won the massive Sellafield contract because he did not make the decision. A spokesperson for the consortium – made up of Britain's Amec, France's Areva and America's Washington Group – told *Private Eye* that all the contending companies had bought tickets for the dinner.

Indeed, when *Private Eye* asked Labour about the arrangements, we were referred to a party official who is also a leading employee of a rival bidder, the Fluor corporation, and is Fluor's main contact in the Sellafield area. It seems all the firms bidding for nuclear work have to support Labour, not just the winners.

'Backbiter'

VITOL STATISTICS

MORE on the Conservative Party's decision to use £150,000 from Ian Taylor, president of oil company Vitol, to run shadow business secretary Alan Duncan's office (see last *Eye.*) Details revealed in Vitol's guilty plea negotiated with the New York District Attorney make the decision even harder to understand.

Duncan's office – and Tory economic policy – is thus funded by a personal donation from the president of a Swiss-based company that pleaded "guilty to the crime of grand larceny in the first degree" last November. Vitol's larceny involved making payments of $13m to Saddam Hussein's government in "criminal" surcharges.

Vitol's plea, negotiated with Manhattan DA Robert Morgenthau, explains that the payments to Saddam's regime were about oil: "Vitol purchased Iraqi crude oil directly from the Iraqi government and from third parties. Under the Oil For Food Programme, all direct purchasers of oil were required to pay the price specified in their crude oil purchase contracts directly into a United Nations trust account." Surcharges paid directly to the Iraq government were banned by the UN.

The district attorney's charges were based on the report of the Volcker Commission into Iraqi corruption. Vitol did not address the Volcker report in its plea, but Volcker gives more disturbing details, saying that in 2000 the Iraq government tried to get cash by putting surcharges on oil sales. This "sparked a crisis in the market for Iraqi crude oil as the United Nations oil overseers warned traders and companies that such payments were illegal. After many of Iraq's regular customers baulked at buying Iraqi oil, a group of four oil traders took a much greater role." Vitol was one of them.

Vitol then used two people who were supportive of Iraq to get access to the oil. It employed Serge Boidevaix, a former French diplomat. Because Iraq was "sensitive" about Vitol's officers being "British and American", Volcker says Vitol "purchased Iraqi oil under the name Vitol France, even though no such company existed".

Vitol also bought Iraqi oil through Syrian journalist Hamida Na'ana, a long-time vocal opponent of Iraqi sanctions and a biographer of Tariq Aziz. Vitol paid what it called a "market premium" to Na'ana on top of the "official selling price", which Volcker says was then used to pay surcharges to Saddam's regime.

The Volcker report adds that Vitol instructed a bank to make payments in Iraq oil deals "without any mention of our company's name".

Duncan has a long association with Vitol, having been a consultant to the firm in the 1990s. When *Private Eye* asked Duncan's office whether these links to Vitol were wise, they said the firm has a deservedly high reputation. Vitol declined to comment.

LONDON CALLING

LESS than 100 days into his new administration, the Tory mayor of London Boris Johnson has appointed a man the trade unions call "the Prince of Darkness" to the most senior role in City Hall.

Tim Parker, a permed former asset-stripper, will be the Greater London Authority (GLA) chief executive, first deputy mayor and have delegated powers to make decisions for Johnson.

"It's true, I have rationalised costs," the former senior partner at private equity outfit CVC Capital said last week of his previous career. "But what I've also done is plough back money to build… businesses up. If you look at the AA its profit is growing and its employment is growing. And I see a slight parallel with what I'm going to do here in City Hall."

If "the Prince" really intends to treat City Hall like the AA, Londoners should perhaps leave town immediately. Parker was appointed chief executive by CVC and venture capital group Permira when they bought the AA in October 2005. The firms raised just £500m of the £1.75bn needed to buy the business, leaving a previously buoyant company with an instant £1.3bn debt to Barclays Capital. Far from "ploughing money back in", Parker's first move was to borrow a further £500m and hand it to the AA's new asset-stripping owners.

He then set about sacking a third of the 10,000 staff (rehiring some when customer complaints reached fever pitch) and placing 2,000 call centre workers under "dataveillance" – watching them on CCTV, logging all keystrokes made on their computers and scheduling bathroom breaks. When the unions complained that Parker's regime unfairly targeted disabled employees, they were promptly derecognised and replaced with a tame "staff association".

Last year he successfully borrowed another £4.8bn from Barclays and negotiated a merger between the AA and insurance behemoth Saga, owned by Charterhouse Capital Partners, paying £2bn into the coffers of the private equity firms. To date CVC and Permira have returned their investment, made a £1bn profit and own a £750m stake in the business. Parker, as pillager-in-chief, has personally pocketed £40m.

Meanwhile AA-Saga, saddled with enormous debts, posted a £267m loss last week which, since losses are offset against corporation tax, also cost the exchequer some £81m.

This damage to the public finances will not even be dented by Parker's decision to charge just £1 a year for his time at City Hall, but the ruse probably looked good to the special advisers at Conservative HQ who imposed him on Boris. If he can steer the mayor through the next four years unscathed, he will surely be rewarded with a safe seat.

Things are already looking up. Parker has found an inspired replacement for the departed Bob Diamond as chair of the Mayor's Fund – Sir Trevor Chinn, an adviser to CVC Capital Partners and former chairman of the AA! "The point about this mayoralty," explains the Prince, "is that we are finding the right horses for the right courses." And as Boris might put it, all from the same Augean stable…

BORIS/LILY CRIME SUMMIT

EU-phemisms

We've pissed off everybody

BRUSSELS SPROUTS

WHILE European Union leaders conspire to ignore swathes of the electorate by calling for ratification of the Lisbon treaty, a rearguard action is being fought in Germany and elsewhere.

Though Germany is usually portrayed as rabidly federalist, lawyers there have unravelled the plot enshrined in both the European Constitution treaty and the subsequent Lisbon treaty to hand more power to Brussels. German president Horst Kohler has now refused to sign off Lisbon until Germany's highest constitutional court rules on two legal challenges by leading right and left-wing MPs, Peter Gauweiler and Diether Dem.

Their appeal follows a finding by German professor Dr Dietrich Murswiek that both treaties were exactly the same and undermined German people's democratic rights – notably by allowing the EU to change its own regulations as it pleases without consulting national parliaments.

This power-grabbing plan was first unveiled by German EU law expert Professor Karl-Albrecht Schachtschneider, a specialist in the first constitutional treaty. "It's been done in quite a sophisticated way and has taken me some time to unravel it. The ordinary politician cannot be expected to understand this treaty."

Though German chancellor Angela Merkel and the man who drafted the constitutional treaty, former French President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, admit both treaties are exactly the same, in Britain Lord Justice Richards and colleagues in the high court decided the two treaties were completely different when they dismissed Stuart Wheeler's challenge for a UK referendum.

Meanwhile the Czech Republic's constitutional court is also debating the legality of the Lisbon treaty, and in Poland President Lech Kacazynski has said it would be "pointless" to sign it after the Irish no vote. Undeterred, the European commission has, er, ignored it, calling for ratification, and MEPs cheered on the reintroduction of the EU's abandoned flag and anthem the day before Richards made his ruling in the British high court. Democracy, anyone?

NUMBER CRUNCHING

5.5 Number of years until passengers can expect "a full seven day railway" with no weekend line closures, according to rail regulator

£55m Total staff bonuses paid out by Network Rail this year

£500,000 Bonus paid to Network Rail boss Iain Coucher alone this year

EYE TV

Burn Up (BBC2)

OVER the last decade, Channel 4 has led the way in big drama series dealing with topical issues: from *Traffic*, which took on the global drugs industry, through *Sex Traffic*, dramatising the trade in women, to *The Government Inspector* (Dr David Kelly) and *Britz*, which was inspired by the war on terror. Most years, at the Baftas, these projects would take the gongs, while BBC honchos sat glumly in their dress-gear wondering why the Beeb couldn't make this kind of thing.

No one wanted to admit the simple answer: the BBC can't make this kind of thing because it is the BBC. The Kelly script would obviously have been impossible because it was a story about the corporation; but all the other topics were untouchable because the place is institutionally unsuited to making controversial plays.

Controlled, though supposedly at arm's length, by the government, the Beeb also lives in daily terror of hostile headlines in the populist press, although bravely taking the risk of tabloid monstering when it comes to the subject of executive pay and bonuses. Accordingly, the organisation is filled with committees and layers of management dedicated to preventing any trouble, sea defences that have vastly increased since the Hutton Report.

Despite this, the Tranter Empire has decided to make a C4-style headline-surfer, with predictable results. **Burn Up** is an obvious attempt to do for oil what *Traffic* managed for narcotics: a big, multi-layered international narrative covering every possible angle of the business.

Admittedly, the stacked levels of compliance editors and editorial policy controllers won't have realised how contentious this project would be by the time it reached the air. When the thing was green-lit, the price of oil was a business-page concern and the future of sustainable energy a middle-pages issue. Imagine Auntie's horror at finding the thing going out at a time when the power of black gold is on every front page, threatening to immolate the Brown administration!

"It's one of those rigged BBC quiz shows"

In fact there's nothing to worry about because the teams of trouble-spotters and controversy-stoppers have done their work all too well. Most of the potential power of *Burn Up* has been burned-out before the two-parter even starts.

The drama starts with a management change-over at Arrow Oil, a $C0_2$ super-polluter. Bald, old Sir Mark is giving the reigns to his son-in-law, Tom.

The main reason for this is that Tom is a young, fit cutie played by Rupert Penry-Jones and no Tranter drama, even on BBC2, is going to risk entering the ratings wars without a love-god who used to be in *Spooks*. It's probably pointless even mentioning that the Channel 4 shows that the BBC is trying to copy were happy to cast RSC stalwarts and kids just out of drama school in order to make the drama seem as real as possible.

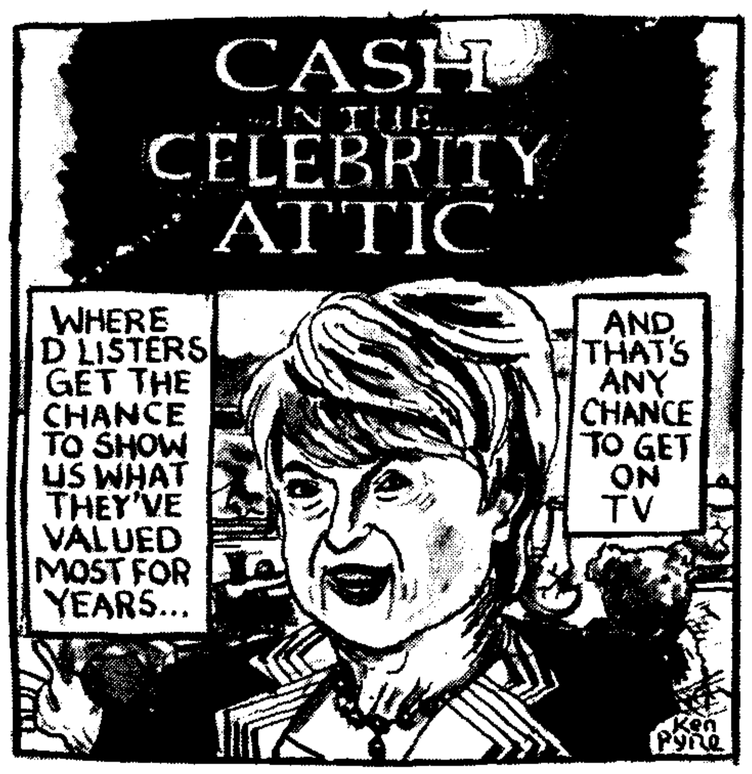
Anyway, Tom has problems because he discovers that the green lobby is targeting Arrow Oil with lawsuits and Inuit suicide-bombers driven mad by the company's exploitation of the Arctic. In reality, oil companies have devoted hours every day for years to countering the environmental lobby; but the BBC is terrified of the audience not understanding what's going on, so there are long conversations between oil bosses who give the impression of never having seen that Al Gore movie.

So, we already have two of the regular sins of BBC issue-led drama: beauty contest casting and subtitles-for-the-stupid exposition. Now, inevitably, comes the third. Just in case there are nasty articles by Peter Hitchens and Christopher Booker, we get lengthy scenes in which some patsy asks "hey, how secure is the science on this global warming?", just so that someone else can deliver an aria outlining the large body of research and documentation on which the drama is based.

Manipulative casting also comes in to play again. For guess who's playing the American who argues that all this stuff about the polar ice-caps melting is pooh? Josh, the really nice one from *The West Wing*.

And so an attempt to do edgy, contemporary drama ends up being as safe as possible. But, hey, that's why those people get their massive bonuses.

'Remote Controller'


CASH IN THE CELEBRITY ATTIC
WHERE D LISTERS GET THE CHANCE TO SHOW US WHAT THEY'VE VALUED MOST FOR YEARS...
AND THAT'S ANY CHANCE TO GET ON TV
Ken Pyne

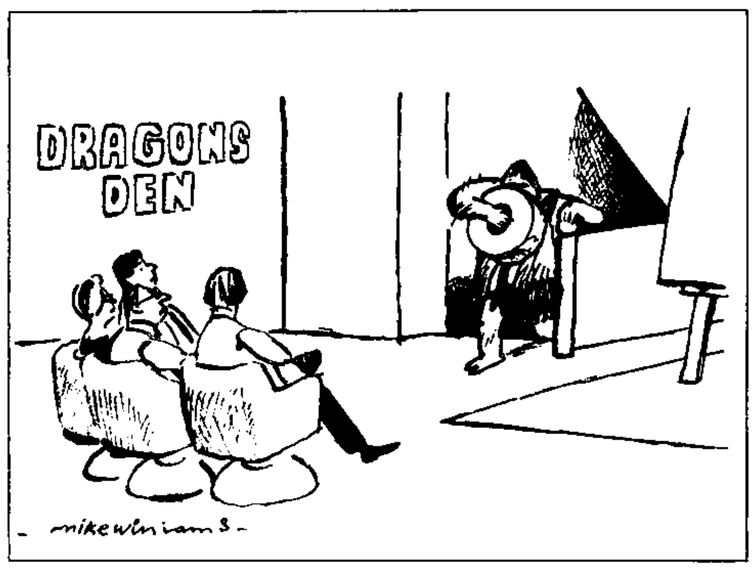
O·B·N

"I was out filming with Gok Wan this week for his new series *Gok's Fashion Fix* and it was like being in the company of the Messiah... Women in London's Oxford Street were throwing themselves at him, some with tears in their eyes... The love and adulation was palpable."

LORRAINE KELLY
The Sun

Submitted by Tom Churchill

£10 paid for entries put forward for the Order of the Brown Nose.



MEDIA NEWS

A NEW push to increase collaboration between the BBC and the commercial sector has been signalled by the chairman of the BBC Trust, Sir Michael Lyons. The BBC must be "more openly collaborative", he told an EU conference on public service broadcasting, adding that the relationship "should be based on more than just rules and regulation".

This news, including the hint that current rules may be due for revision, will have delighted some senior managers. A glance at the BBC's annual report confirms that the independent production company Juniper Communications (co-owned by BBC non-executive director Samir Shah and Richard Clemmow, husband of the director of BBC Vision, Jana Bennett) received £1m this year, up from £600,000 the year before.

Menna Richards, controller of BBC Wales, will also be delighted. Her sister has a controlling interest in the independent production company Torpedo Limited, which provides radio and television programmes for... BBC Wales.

It was paid £360,000 in 2007, up from £275,000 in 2006.

"YOU can see in this survey evidence that the people who work here love the BBC. We've got a committed, passionate group of people who believe in what the BBC stands for as much as I do."

That was D-G Mark Thompson's verdict on the Beeb's staff survey two weeks ago. So he must have been looking forward to the quickly oversubscribed, invitation-only lunch organised to discuss the BBC's annual report.

Alas, he was wrong. Complaints (which were described by the in-house magazine *Ariel* as "colourful") about soaring executive pay, outsourcing of jobs, management inefficiency and low staff morale filled the room. So did embarrassing allegations that payments to contributors on *The One Show* were not being paid and that freelancers were no longer willing to work for the BBC as a result. Shouts of "hear, hear" and "disgraceful" were reported as "nods of agreement".

DURING his lifetime, long-serving BBC foreign correspondent Charles Wheeler enjoyed a reputation for speaking frankly about his paymasters, accusing the corporation of "dumbing down" and "losing its way".

That criticism was conveniently forgotten in the wake of his death earlier this month. Head of News Peter Horrocks sent an email to all newsroom staff rueing his loss and wondering what he would have made of BBC News today. Horrocks had the grace to admit that Wheeler might have been suspicious of a system that homogenises the news. "But I hope that he would have seen some things to admire in the new operation. He would have wanted us to be thinking of the journalism first."

Wheeler might have only just died, but it's good to know his ghost is already on-message.

TREVOR McDonald cut to the chase on Monday 14 July when he told viewers of the *News at Ten* who wanted to know more about a story on knife crime to "go to ITV dot com forward slash news".

SATELLITE TV station Al Jazeera's New York reporter, the former BBC business news presenter John Terrett, has earned himself a rare distinction. He has been banned from travelling with the United Nations security council or with UN secretary-general Ban Ki-moon and his entourage, following an explosive altercation in Sudan between Terrett and mild mannered UN press spokesman Yves Sorokobi.

Only after special pleading was the UN persuaded not to send Terrett and his team back on the next plane to New York, fearing that Sudanese officials who had witnessed his astonishing behaviour might decide to let him cool down in one of their notorious jails.

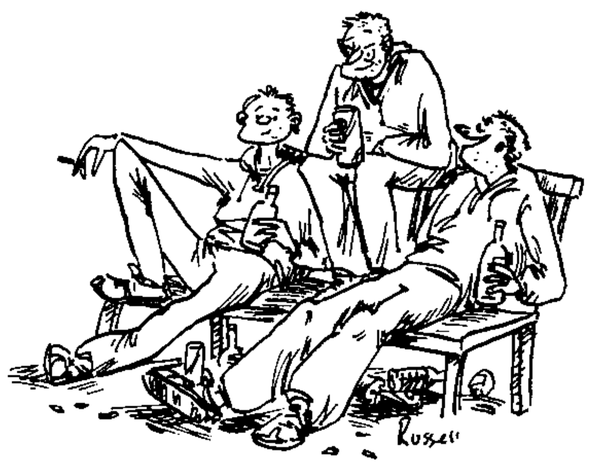
Sorokobi was left visibly shaken after Terrett lost his rag and began shouting, swearing and jabbing his finger at the hapless UN spokesman, the hack having arrived late for a security council press briefing in Khartoum. A ferocious Terrett exploded, describing Sorokobi as a "f****** c***" and then engaged in a ferocious argument in front of other senior UN officials and the assembled UN press corps, some of whom recall that John "Tourette" Terrett has serious form.

When he was a New York-based business corr for the BBC, "Tourette" had to be escorted out of the Times Square office where Auntie was based, as he was exploding at colleague Michelle Fleury. On that occasion a glass door was broken by a departing Terrett as a trembling Fleury dialled her bosses asking for assistance.

SENSE OF PERSPECTIVE

"Not since the suffragette movement began over a century ago has a woman so stood up for what she has believed in..."

– Davina McCall on the behaviour of Big Brother *evictee Jennifer, 4 July.*



"Let's check Facebook to see if we can find out what we did last night"

AS Remote Controller often kvetches, TV is being poisoned by the bio-drama. If a play isn't about Margaret Thatcher or Mary Whitehouse, it's another impersonation of a dead comedian who didn't want his audience to know about the blow-jobs from rent-boys.

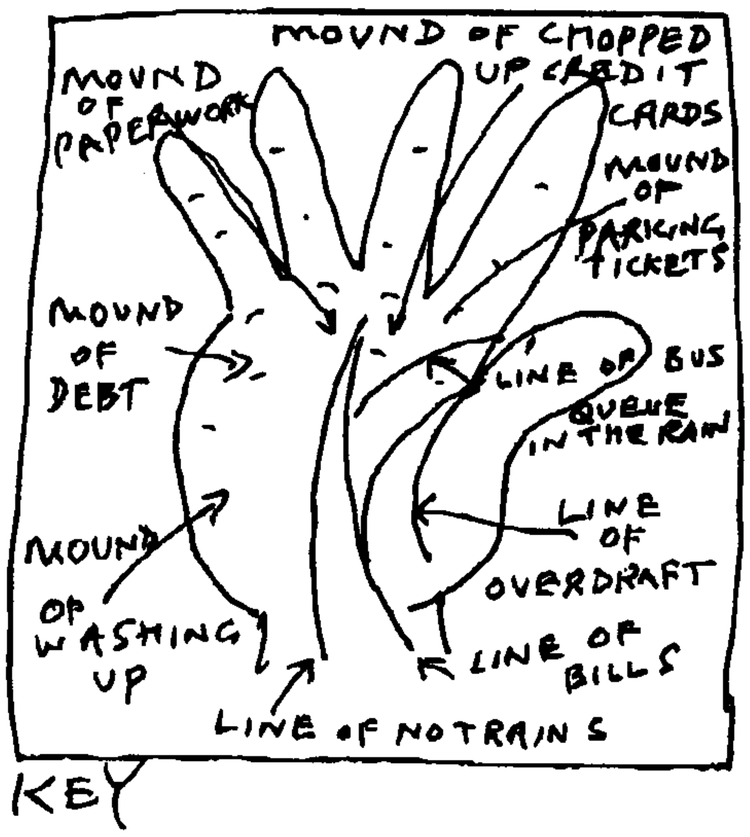
Now theatre's apparently going the same way. The last four dramas Nicholas Hytner has put on at the National have been about, variously, Harold Macmillan, a dead Norwegian explorer, a dead German theatre director and Emily Pankhurst.

At least those scripts are honest about what they're doing. *The Female of The Species*, which Dame Eileen Atkins is about to bring in to the playhouse named after dear Johnnie, must be the sneakiest bio-drama ever written.

Australian dramatist Joanna Murray-Smith has come up with the idea of a famous feminist, who wrote a bestseller called *The Cerebral Vagina* and is now a bit of a know-all on the goggle-box, being surprised at her house in the country by a deranged student who holds her hostage.

Now where do these writers get their ideas from? This wouldn't have anything to do with Germaine Greer being tied up at her cottage, in 2000, by a varsity admirer, would it – a young woman revealed in court to have serious psychological problems? Murray-Smith insists not, telling interviewers the Greer incident was merely "the starting point" for her "comedy" and that Dame Eileen is playing a fictional character.

Oh, yeah?



DUMB BRITAIN

The Weakest Link, BBC1

Anne Robinson: In seafood on a restaurant menu, the French word "poisson" literally translates into English as what?
Contestant: Chicken.

Robinson: In mythology, what term for a potion that increases sexual desire is derived from the name of the Greek goddess of love?
WAG: Ooh! (*waves her arms about*) Ooh! I dead know it... Viagra!

Robinson: During World War II, in June 1940, Paris was captured by troops from the army of which country?
Contestant: England.

Robinson: In 1985 the first black tennis player to win the Wimbledon men's singles title was Arthur who?
Contestant: Askey.

NUMBER CRUNCHING

320 Jobs lost in English Regions department of BBC as part of recent cost-cutting measures

300 Number of staff English Regions department of BBC plans to recruit for launch of BBC Local service

AD NAUSEAM

FOR the first 45 seconds of the latest ad campaign from McDonald's, you'd be forgiven for thinking you were watching the Swiss Family Robinson.

Kids cavort in bucolic bliss as they help their parents hoe and sow. Verily, the sodden soil is Pan's playground, as the tots plant seeds and wait for Mother Nature's ample bosom to yield forth. Eventually, it is revealed that they have been planting flowers in the shape of a chicken, a cow and a sack of spuds. McDonald's Happy Meals, the £5m campaign thus asks us to believe, are ethically sourced.

It might seem mean-spirited to continue to condemn McDonald's for past misdemeanours, given that all they are trying to say with this campaign is that they've mended their ways.

Trouble is, they haven't. With the knowing wink of fate that no advertiser, no matter how rich, can ever control, McDonald's new campaign happens to have coincided with last week's *Which?* report, entitled "Food Fables – The Second Sitting". In it, McDonald's Happy Meals were once again found to be targeting children via film promotions, a "child-focused" website and sports sponsorship. A McDonald's cheeseburger, merely one part of the Happy Meal combo, lest we forget, contains half of a four- to six-year-old's daily salt intake and 6g of saturated fat.

So, regardless of the provenance of McDonald's burgers (and letters from farmers debating McDonald's squeaky-clean supply chain should be sent to the usual address), they're still not good for your kids. Yet McDonald's are still using their marketing department to target them.

A NEW internet ad for Land Rover sees a gobby football lout corner Zara Phillips to tell her why eventing is a pointless sport. "It doesn't involve a lot of skill," he says. "The horse does all the work. You just sit on it and look pretty." The horse then expresses its disapproval by snotting all over his face.

The ad is meant to show Land Rover's support for the British eventing team in the run-up to the Beijing Olympics. But Zara Phillips, as any eventing fan knows, won't be taking part in the Olympics because her horse, Toytown, is injured. If Land Rover really wanted to support British eventing, perhaps it could have showcased one of her team-mates who will actually be competing.

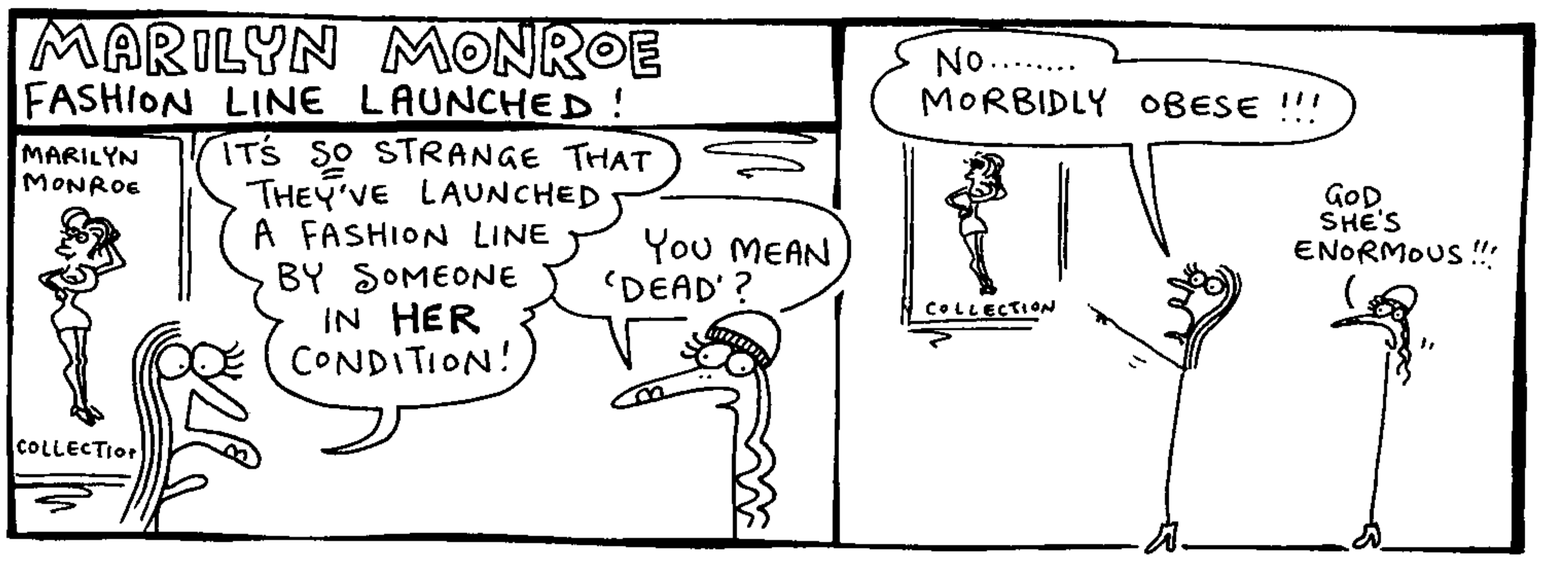
Moreover, the pattern of events has merely proved the vulgar footballer right – an injury to Zara's horse has forced an entirely healthy Zara to pull out. Hate to side with the shell-suited lumpenprole, but doesn't that lend some credence to the fact that "the horse does all the work"?

The Government was concerned about **ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR** and in [redacted] passed a law about it. This law allows Police to break up and move on groups of young people who are gathered together in a pubic place.

– UNCRC Explained, Scottish Government Publication

SUPERMODELS

KERBER


MARILYN MONROE FASHION LINE LAUNCHED!
MARILYN MONROE
IT'S SO STRANGE THAT THEY'VE LAUNCHED A FASHION LINE BY SOMEONE IN HER CONDITION!
YOU MEAN 'DEAD'?
COLLECTION
NO..... MORBIDLY OBESE!!!
COLLECTION
GOD SHE'S ENORMOUS!!!

SIGNAL FAILURES

Tom-foolery

"WHY is everyone so bloody miserable?" rail minister Tom Harris famously asked in his blog. Well, one reason is that Tom Harris is rail minister.

After nearly two years in the post, Harris still has an amazingly weak understanding of Britain's rail system. He's been telling people how "successful" the system is and how British Rail in the 1980s was "considered a basket case" which "consumed huge sums of public funding".

Perhaps his aides should tell him how the rail system has recently been consuming four or five times *more* public funding than BR received at the height of the 1980s economic boom, despite the extra revenue from all the eye-watering fare rises since privatisation. Perhaps they should also remind him that Network Rail has a £20bn debt (more than three times its annual revenue) and that his government has decreed that ticket prices must rise steeply so fare revenue in 2014 will be 80 percent higher than in 2007.

Harris happily admits Labour inherited "a botched privatisation", as if his party had corrected the flaws. But Labour's only innovation is Network Rail, hardly a model of efficiency. Labour gave it a bizarre structure so it didn't inherit Railtrack's obsession with profits and share price yet could still be classed as a private company and keep its debt off Treasury books.

As when the Tories "botched" it, the railway remains an ugly mix of commercial interests, often in conflict. Without an equivalent to the BR board, no rail managers provide overall leadership. Harris and his mandarins are trying to fill the vacuum – the very ones who organised the disastrous new GNER and First Great Western franchises and made such a bureaucratic dog's dinner of adding two more carriages to each Pendolino train (*Eye* 1207). Their response to record oil prices has been to order new diesel trains intended to last beyond 2040, while still having no programme to electrify more lines.

Profits which a nationalised railway could reinvest (or not amass in the first place) are leaking out: Richard Branson alone pocketed £24m last year from his 51 percent stake in Virgin Rail. Meanwhile hundreds of managers, regulators and monitors are employed in backrooms to stop the dysfunctional railway falling apart, to organise or bid for new franchises or to argue over how much cash Network Rail deserves. Even then, masses of outside consultants and lawyers are still apparently needed.

Harris cites "record" passenger numbers as evidence of success: "Last year the railway carried over 1.2bn passengers." In reality, the revenue-allocation computer gave the train companies 1.2bn packets of money. Cash paid for a ticket from A to B is divvied up between multiple companies if the journey could be made on more than one company's trains. So it's still one journey by one passenger, but in Harris's parallel universe it counts as more than one "passenger".

Instead of crowing over fictitious statistics, Harris might reflect on how much more capacity the rail network would have today, how many more passengers would use trains and how much cheaper the fares would be if BR had survived and received the massive wads of cash the privatised railway has swallowed.

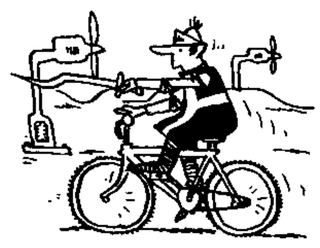
TRAINS built a few years ago for Cross-Country services are unusually narrow so that some of them can tilt to take bends faster on the west-coast mainline (which has trackside gizmos to tell Pendolino trains where to tilt).

Last year the department for transport transferred Cross-Country services on the west-coast line to TransPennine Express. Now TPE runs its non-tilting trains over a mainline equipped for tilt, while Cross-Country runs its tilting trains over lines mostly unequipped for tilt... and is now stripping out the costly train-tilt equipment.

'Dr B. Ching'

ECO-GNOMICS

Breaking wind



WHEN climate change minister Phil Woolas proudly unveiled a new "Green Homes Service" in February, advising consumers how to adopt a greener lifestyle, he said it would include information on alternative energy sources like micro-generation.

"We believe this type of technology will have a significant role to play if we are to meet our goal of cutting CO2 emissions by over half by 2050," he said. True to form, when the government then announced its renewable energy strategy last month (see *Eye* 1214) in included financial incentives to encourage householders to generate their own power. But how easy is it for individuals to do so?

Christopher Broadbent, an East Sussex farmer, has spent 18 months trying to install a very small wind turbine on his isolated land. In February 2007 he applied for permission to put a 1.7 metre sail turbine in the middle of an orchard where no one could see it. Mr Broadbent's local planning authority was supportive; but then Rother district council's senior environmental health officer (EHO) became involved.

On advice from Defra (Mr Woolas's department), the EHO objected that there might be an issue with noise, even though data supplied by the turbine manufacturer, Ampair, was sufficient to indicate no problem with noise.

Mr Broadbent's farm is on a remote hill. When it is windy, all you hear is wind. When there is no wind, the turbine will not turn. There has been no objection from his nearest neighbours – all hidden away by a road, Mr Broadbent's farmhouse, the orchard and a very large oak tree. Yet the EHO's reason for declining the application was cited as "amenity impact".

It seems Defra requires an independent noise survey that conforms to an obscure standard, "BS4142". Defra has changed the rules on noise surveys so often that manufacturers have all but given up trying to conform with them. For the homeowner, the cost of a survey effectively doubles the cost of the turbine. Though parliament has just passed a planning bill designed to ease this kind of local authority obstruction, it seems the requirement for noise surveys on micro turbines will be unchanged. Thus while motorbikes screech down a nearby B-road, the gentle whirr of a small turbine in a remote orchard is deemed a greater risk to environmental health.

As Mr Woolas rightly said: "Before micro-generation becomes a realistic alternative energy source for the householder... there are a number of hurdles that need to be negotiated." The biggest is the incompetence and intransigence of his own department.

"It's our strategy for cutting CO_2"

Down on the Farm

NOWADAYS the government no longer has a minister for agriculture and newspapers no longer have agricultural correspondents. The result is the sort of piece that appeared in the *Daily Telegraph* on 11 July, written by a consumer affairs correspondent and announcing that rural abattoirs were under threat from new hygiene rules.

The article reported how many of our smaller slaughterhouses face closure due to a huge increase in the charges they pay the Food Standards Agency to have their meat inspected by an army of officials. "Through a plan to modernise meat inspection," it read, "hundreds of jobs could be lost," adding that consumers would have to pay more for their meat when they buy it in supermarkets.

Since the *Telegraph* quotes the FSA's boast that already "even the nuclear industry does not have such a through testing regime", it wasn't entirely clear what this latest increase had to do with "modernisation". The real problem is that in recent years this "testing regime" has cost taxpayers £190m, and the government is now insisting that its entire cost must be paid by the meat industry (which is why, since few smaller abattoirs can afford the new charges, many more will have to close).

This will be no surprise to readers of this column, which reported on this latest threat to the meat industry in March (*Eye 1206*). But sadly missing from the *Telegraph* story was the real reason we have easily the highest meat inspection costs in Europe. This is because of the mess Britain made of implementing EU directives, which has already closed down three quarters of our abattoirs (*Eyes passim*).

The reason Defra is now so desperate to recover the costs of this madness is the £450m it lost in EU subsidies by failing to administer them properly. Although it is Brussels which now gives the orders on how our farming and meat industries are run (which is why our government has only a junior apparatchik instead of an agriculture minister), we have made a unique mess of it.

'Muckspreader'

● In the last issue (*Eye 1214*) the *Down on the Farm* column on the subject of wind turbines contained an editor's error. When it referred to "the taxpayer funding all this" it should have read "the electricity buyer funding all this".

CANAL PLUS

MORE on the British Waterways Board (BWB), which is so hard up it pulled out of the Cotswold canals project earlier this year citing money problems.

Its partners were furious at the withdrawal of funds (the project aims to link the rivers Thames and Severn), but they will be even angrier to learn what the board *does* intend to spend its money on.

The BWB, responsible for Britain's 2,400 mile-long canal system, has faced a budget nightmare ever since Defra cut its funding by £50m over the next five years to help plug a deficit created by the department's own incompetence in paying EU subsidies to farmers (see *Eyes passim*).

Despite the BWB's problems, however, a Commons select committee report now reveals that the board has nevertheless commissioned consultants at KPMG, with input from Merrill Lynch, to conduct a "status review" of its institutional structure costing... £600,000.

BWB bosses admitted to the MPs they did not even expect the consultants to come up with a "magic bullet". The select committee was not impressed.

"We find it hard to believe that analytical capability does not exist within BW, Defra or other public sector organisations that could have conducted this study at lower cost to public funds... BW should now explain why it was necessary to spend money of this order at a time when it was facing significant pressure on its finances sufficient for it to withdraw its support for the Cotswold Canals project." Quite.

ROTTEN BOROUGHS

STAGGL HUNT

FEDERAL prosecutors in the US are very keen to talk to one of the "investment advisers" who helped Dame Shirley Porter, the disgraced former Tory leader of Westminster council, hide £48m she owed the taxpayer in the wake of the 1980s "homes for votes" scandal (*Eyes passim*).

American authorities declared Mario Staggl a fugitive after he failed to answer a summons to a Florida court in May. Staggl, 43, who lives in Liechtenstein, is alleged to have assisted one Bradley Birkenfeld, a former employee of UBS, the Swiss bank which styles itself the world's leading "wealth manager", in helping rich clients evade billions of dollars in US taxes. Birkenfeld pleaded guilty in June to helping Californian businessman Igor Olenicoff stash millions in Swiss accounts far from the clutches of the Internal Revenue Service. A US senate sub-committee report last week estimated that UBS has hidden nearly $18bn from the taxman on behalf of some 19,000 wealthy Americans in recent years.

Staggl was also a director of Zollikon Investments SA, the British Virgin Islands company which handled millions of pounds belonging to the Porter family while Dame Shirley was publicly claiming to be stony broke. Zollikon bought a £1.5m Mayfair flat for Porter when she deemed it safe to return to the UK in 2006, and from 1995 it channelled interest payments to her and her now deceased husband, Sir Leslie Porter, in connection with a $12m loan the Porters made to the Telos Corporation, a US defence communications software company (*Eyes* 1178 and 1180). Dame Shirley's son, John Porter, bought a controlling interest in Telos in 1993 with money provided by his parents, according to the US regulator the Securities and Exchange Commission.

In 2005 German prosecutors questioned Staggl about his connections with two men who were later accused of trying to arrange shipments of uranium-enrichment equipment to Libya as part of a black market in nuclear technology headed by Abdul Qadeer Khan, the so-called "father" of Pakistan's Bomb.

Paul Dimoldenberg, leader of the Labour group on Westminster city council, told the *Eye*: "Everybody knew Dame Shirley wasn't telling the truth – now we know how she hid the money, and the sort of people she used to help her."

● THIS column has been pointing out the shortcomings of Doncaster mayor Martin Winter since *before* he was first elected in 2002, but it has taken his council colleagues more than six years to catch up. Last week 42 out of 57 of the town's councillors supported a vote of "no confidence" in his leadership and conduct.

Winter, all bone head and brass neck, has of course refused to resign. "I will complete a second term. That is what 46,000 people elected me to do," he declared afterwards. Ah, yes. In the 2005 mayoral election Winter was the first choice of 40,015 voters (and the second choice of 5,727) out of an electorate of 216,215. Winter's six rivals won 78,935 votes between them and there were an extraordinary 7,569 spoiled papers.

TARA FOR NOW

LAST month this column noted how London mayor Boris Johnson and his planning adviser Sir Simon Milton had arranged a series of meetings to discuss the capital's social housing needs – with property developers rather than with housing associations or charities (*Eye* 1213). When asked why, the mayor's spokesman told us Boris was "committed to building 50,000 affordable homes over the next three years" and would be shortly revealing his "vision" for doing this.

So how are the Tories getting on with supplying the new homes Londoners need? Earlier this month Sir Simon's Westminster city council received an application to convert the former Pembridge Palace hotel in Bayswater back into private homes. The hotel was originally carved out of six large terraced houses and the applicants wanted to convert five of them back into individual houses and the sixth into three flats. Planning officers handling the application were aware of the council's policy "H4", which normally requires a development of this size to include an "affordable" housing element. The former hotel could have provided more than 20 spacious flats. But "affordable" housing is the very last thing the applicant, a company called Target Living which specialises in blinged-up interiors for very rich people with far more money than taste, has in mind. It is owned by Tara Bernerd, daughter of property tycoon Elliott Bernerd, and her husband James Archer, son of Lord Archole of Belmarsh. In 2001 Archole Jnr was banned from working in the City after being caught attempting to manipulate share prices, and he now scrapes by with a little light property development.

Target Living had refused to provide any affordable housing or to pay anything towards affordable housing under policy H4, so the officers left the matter to be determined by the planning sub-committee, chaired by Tory councillor Robert Davis (*Eyes passim*), who happens to be Sir Simon Milton's civil partner (in May Davis said he hoped to keep tabs on London-wide planning matters by means of "pillow talk" with Sir Simon). Would Davis and his colleagues use their "discretion" in favour of the Archole-Bernerds? Of course they would!

The committee decided that the restoration of the interiors and exteriors of this Grade II listed building and reversion to five original town houses trumped the need to provide affordable housing. Permission was granted, subject to the Archoles making a contribution of £300,000 towards "environmental improvements" in the square. Five more luxury homes for the very rich – exactly what London needs right now!

HOME AND DRY

AS COUNCIL workers went on strike last week in protest at their below-inflation 2.45 percent pay offer, employees of Northumberland county council were having their noses well and truly rubbed in it.

Their former chief executive, Mark Henderson, walked away with a package worth hundreds of thousands of pounds, even though he broke a "golden handcuffs" pledge to stick with the council until it transferred to a new unitary authority next year – a pledge that had been rewarded with a 20 per cent rise. His salary in his new job is believed to be more than the £150,000 he was getting at Northumberland, meanwhile.

Trebles all round!

THE MAGNIFICENT SEVEN

EDUCATION supremo Steve Beynon has gone to the top of the class on the Isle of Wight by becoming the council's seventh chief executive in 10 years.

His elevation to the £200,000-a-year vacancy, occasioned by the departure of Joe "Vera" Duckworth to Newham, is his reward for masterminding a hugely unpopular education "reform" package.

The Tories swept to power three years ago on a pledge to leave schools alone – only to do a U-turn with plans to let "Butcher" Beynon take an axe to a score of schools, including small rural primaries upon which Ofsted has heaped glowing praise. The cull prompted a resounding vote of no confidence in Beynon by the island's teachers, backed by governors and parents. Even Tory MP Andrew Turner criticised the moves and some Tory councillors left the ruling group in disgust.

By coincidence, Duckworth's predecessor at Newham, Dave Burbage (*Eyes passim*), is now IoW's finance chief and has been acting chief exec since Vera left. He now returns to beancounting in the expectation of being able to salt away large wads of wonga in county coffers from the sale of redundant school sites to developers. Or not, if the plummeting housing market puts paid to this handy way to keep council tax down prior to next June's council elections.

> ...The road humps would be constructed with tapered edges with sinudsodial ramps, 4.5 metres in length, not more than 100 metres in height...
>
> *London Borough of Waltham Forest news sheet*

MUSICAL CHAIRS

MORE from the Royal National College for the Blind, where students and tutors are reeling from a restructuring which has led to closures in the music department and 12 staff redundancies.

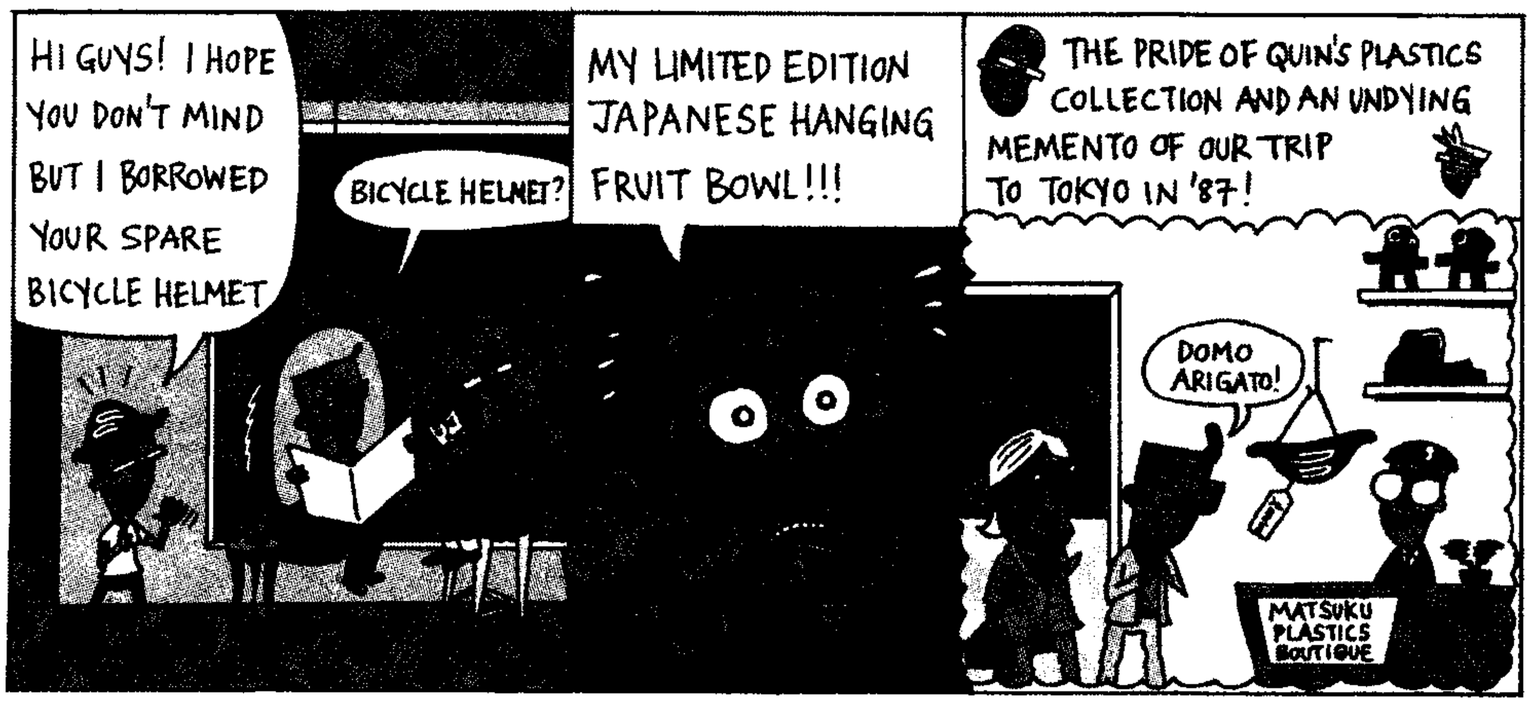
The final tutor in the music technology department was told to clear her desk within the hour and marched off site after nine years of service. Her farewell gift was posted to her.

The piano-tuning course is being closed, despite the fact that it was described as the best in Europe and offered an excellent small business opportunity to its students, especially since there is a national shortage of tuners. The college has already sold off most of the pianos, so without them and the special workshop equipment needed it will be impossible to resuscitate the course. One blind governor has raised £100,000 in an attempt to save the course, but those efforts have proved in vain.

Meanwhile students halfway through the music technology course have no idea what will happen to them. They face unemployment – unless of course they fancy beginning training for the Paralympics, in which case they could make use of the college's new £25m sports and complementary therapy centre.

IT'S GRIM UP NORTH LONDON

KNIFE & PACKER


HI GUYS! I HOPE YOU DON'T MIND BUT I BORROWED YOUR SPARE BICYCLE HELMET
BICYCLE HELMET?
MY LIMITED EDITION JAPANESE HANGING FRUIT BOWL!!!
THE PRIDE OF QUIN'S PLASTICS COLLECTION AND AN UNDYING MEMENTO OF OUR TRIP TO TOKYO IN '87!
DOMO ARIGATO!
MATSUKU PLASTICS BOUTIQUE

NOOKS and CORNERS

OH DEAR, accidents will happen. Witness the case of the Tabernacle Calvinistic Methodist Chapel in the centre of Aberystwyth, a fine example of the huge chapels which are such landmarks in Welsh towns.

Built in 1878-79, it had a vast and impressive galleried interior and a stone arched facade in a style its architect, Richard Owens, called "Italo-Lombard". Closed in 2002, the chapel had been empty but had been bought by Mr Meirion Ellis Jones, of Meirion Motors and Merlin Homes, who had secured planning permission to convert the interior into 14 flats.

Late on the evening of 4 July, the building went on fire. The blaze was so fierce nearby residents had to be evacuated and by morning the listed building was a gutted shell.

At first CADW, the Welsh historic buildings agency, insisted the façade be retained. Colin Fayers, project manager for Merlin Homes, is reported to have said that: "The intention was to demolish three sides of the chapel, but the demolition experts have concerns about the remaining one side left. We'll have to assess the situation as we go along." A structural report commissioned by the developers then persuaded Ceredigion County Council that the ruin was unstable and that it all had to come down – when any building is considered "unsafe" all public bodies seem to panic. So what remained of the Tabernacle Chapel was rapidly demolished a week later, on 11th July. The speed of its disappearance has caused much upset, and anger, in Aberystwyth.

The Victorian building was the fourth chapel built on the site since 1785. Clearly it was the last: a nice block of flats will now rise there instead. Meanwhile, five people have been arrested on suspicion of arson.

EARLIER this month English Heritage published its new Heritage at Risk Register for 2008, which surveys how we – individuals, organisations, local authorities and government – look after our historic buildings, monuments and landscapes.

It reveals that 3.2 percent of grades I and II*-listed buildings are at "high risk", as are 7 percent of registered parks and gardens and no less than 21 percent of scheduled monuments.

This document is a useful tool in encouraging the beneficial reuse of neglected structures. One compelling reason for doing so – for maintaining and converting rather than demolishing and replacing – is the concept of "embodied energy".

As English Heritage explains: "In bringing them back to life we not only respect the craftspeople who created them and those who value them today, but also the planet from whose scarce resources they are made… Demolition and replacement means not only losing all of the resources embodied in the original building but also the investment of yet more energy for demolition, the creation and delivery of new construction materials, the building process itself and the disposal of the resulting waste. Each year more than 100 million tonnes of construction and demolition materials and soil end up as landfill – roughly half of the UK's total waste."

You might therefore expect our government to encourage the re-use of sound and serviceable buildings. In fact it does the opposite – particularly in the field of education. The promotion of academies, while throwing huge sums of public money at building new schools (in the generally unfounded belief that they will be better than older buildings) is resulting in the widespread demolition of fine architecture, mostly to the benefit of building contractors. Victorian schools are particularly under threat, although being well built, with generous internal spaces, they are adaptable and easily convertible to other uses.

There was the recent scandalous demolition of the Bonner Street School in Bethnal Green to suit the convenience of the contractor (Eye 1171 & 1182]. Now comes news that Southwark council has approved demolition of the Friern School by Peckham Rye Common, despite opposition.

This is another Board School, and a fine example, built in 1896 by T.J. Bailey, chief architect to the London School Board. Such brick buildings – tall and urbane with big windows – were very progressive when built and can work well still. If redundant, they are eminently convertible into flats. But the Friern School, empty for some years, is to be torn down to make way for new buildings for the proposed Harris Boys Academy. This is stupid and an unnecessary waste. As the Victorian Society comments: "At a time when sustainability is on the agenda for all new development, it should be a priority to retain and reuse viable buildings like Friern School."

The society says many other decent schools are under threat. In the London borough of Brent there are plans to demolish two schools in Stonebridge to build new ones together with 250 residential units on the site. Our Lady of Lourdes School dates from the 1960s but the Stonebridge School is Late Victorian, designed by G.E.S. Laurence, architect to the Willesden School Board. The Victorian Society has proposed that it should be listed: "With a little imagination and care, buildings like this can easily accommodate modern needs."

Quite. But imagination is usually lacking, while government policies encourage only short-termism. Another example: in Wigan, Leigh Girl's Grammar School, now Leigh Central School, in Windermere Road is proposed for replacement although it is structurally sound, in use, an important local landmark and considered by English Heritage to be of "undoubted local significance". Will we ever learn?

'Piloti'

YOUNG BRITISH ARTISTS

BY BIRCH

Jake's taken it badly, the way Banksy's cover's been blown.
How could they destroy kids' illusions like that?
GUERILLA ARTIST EXPOSED AS THIRTY SOMETHING PUBLIC SCHOOLBOY SHOCK!
Right!
He's been hinting that it was really him for years...

I-SPY

Worthing

Co. Kildare, Ireland

Submitted by S. van der Does de Bye and Francis Drake. £10 paid for similar submissions. *(SAE required for return of photographs)*

SOCIAL HOUSING

THE government's insistence that it is committed to building three million affordable homes in the UK by 2020, despite the property market freefall, is not taken seriously by anyone with the faintest knowledge of the social housing sector.

Even in the "good times" the 3m figure was always going to be unachievable, so with 4m households now on social housing waiting lists and another 1m set to join them by 2010, the government urgently needs to find other ways to meet its affordable housing target.

The UK currently has 4.9m households living in social housing: 2.7m households in council housing and 2.2m in housing association properties. The question that has yet to be addressed is how many properties are lived in lawfully and how many are unlawfully sublet by the official tenant.

In the 1990s two studies were conducted in Lambeth to find out if council properties on two large estates were occupied by the lawful tenant. Both studies were stopped when it became clear a can of worms had been opened: subletting was rife and tenants had disappeared into thin air.

Subletting a council property can be a nice, non-taxable earner. The subtenant is often charged a weekly rent of £200-£400 while the official tenant pays the council or housing association the official rent of £60-£70 a week and pockets the difference.

In fact, councils do not even know if "their" tenant has other tenancies with neighbouring councils as such information is never exchanged. Some years ago a dogged investigator found one trickster with no fewer than 28 tenancies in 28 different London boroughs, but it is rare for subletting to be investigated. The reason is that provided rent is paid on a property, local authorities and housing associations continue to meet their government rent collection targets and avoid penalties. Tenants who sublet have little difficulty affording the rent. Setting up a standing order is about as hard as it gets.

Estimates vary about the extent of unlawful subletting. It's thought to be between 3 percent 10 percent – anything from 147,000 properties up to a possible 490,000. It comes as a shock to learn that, according to the Audit Commission's latest fraud figures, the UK's 474 local authorities managed to recover just 69 sublet properties.

Tackling the problems and having properties occupied by those in genuine need of social housing would not only help ease the housing waiting list, but would also help the government achieve its affordable homes target without having to build so many costly new properties. Government inaction in this area therefore remains incomprehensible.

Letters

Must try harder

Sir,

I refer to your comments written under "Academy Special" (Eye 1214).

Your references to the school's latest OFSTED report stating no improvement has been made and that staff and student morale is at rock bottom is completely morally and factually incorrect.

OFSTED has reported – in each of its four monitoring visits – that significant improvements had been made against each of the key issues and on Friday 11 July the school was removed from Special Measures and was judged to be providing a satisfactory level of education.

Staff and student morale is in fact high and teachers and non-teachers have worked tirelessly to improve standards and raise attainment. The resulting OFSTED judgements are a credit to their hard work and to the resilience and character of the students.

Please get your facts right before you make that kind of fatuous and damaging set of comments.

I trust that you will print a retraction in the next possible issue.

Many thanks,
JO SHUTER,
Interim Head Teacher, Pimlico School.

Gavel bashed

Sir,

I used to look forward to Gavel Basher's columns, as I had always assumed him to be a political insider – well informed about the major issues. His most recent column supported the farcical, unworkable and populist suggestion that MPs should declare how much they would do the job for on the ballot, the likely outcome being that only wealthy business people could afford to stand for parliament, or that MPs would more easily be corrupted by bribery. His points all suggested that MPs are hugely overpaid – a disturbingly cheap, populist, and easily disproven comment for an esteemed organ.

MARTY JARVY.
Via email.

Sir,

Funny no one in the entire press-gang mentioned that an MP has to reapply for his job at a minimum of every five years against at least three strong rivals, or that fiddling expenses by businessmen, editors, journalists or tube drivers robs the taxpayer in exactly the same way as it does when salaries are paid out of public funds.

Emotive words like "trough-snouters", "gas-guzzlers" (anybody ever think of the poor sods at Rovers who made them?) or "Frankenstein Foods" that put back the progress of feeding for the world ten years are just debate stiflers.

DICK LANGTON,
Via email.

Ad break

Sir,

So, 'This column's most eagerly awaited ads... from British Airways and Virgin Atlantic' hadn't appeared when Eye 1214, 'went to press on Monday'. While I agree that they might not have appeared on the correct Saturday, if you had looked at the back page of the Sunday Times News Review for Sunday 6th July there it was.

By the way, in the interest of accuracy, the web address as quoted by the advert is www.airpassengerrefund.co.uk; not as you printed.

Yours etc,
PETER TAYLOR,
Acomb, York.

Yorkshire & Humbug?

Sir,

If Richard Corbett is seeking guidance as to the merits of his proposals to raise the thresholds that allows MEPs to access taxpayers' money, then he should look no further than the last line of his own correspondence (Letters, Eye 1214).

Yes it is "public money" and that means money which belongs to the people, which refers to those responsible for putting the likes of Mr Corbett, the extreme left, right and centre in office, and as unpalatable as it may be in certain circumstances, Mr Corbett has no right to deny what the people have permitted, despite what his own party may advise him.

Perhaps Mr Corbett and his colleagues in the Labour Party, rather than seeking to stifle debate and democracy, may wish to focus their efforts on finding out why growing numbers of traditional Labour voters are turning to the extreme right wing to represent them! Could it be that New Labour have taken their support for granted and abandoned them and the issues they face on a daily basis?

Silencing protest does not agreement make after all.

Yours,
JOHN BLOOMFIELD,
Via email.

Lookalike

Marquis de Sade

Max Mosley

Sir,

The Guardian recently published pictures of these two gentlemen. Are they by any chance related?

ENA B. SMAXWELL
(with thanks to reader D.C. Manison for the tip-off).

Air worthy

Sir,

I was interested to read in Eye No. 1213 that the MoD needed access to the Boeing computer source code for the Mk.3 Chinook as a requirement for certifying the aircraft as safe to fly. I wonder what the Civil Aviation Authority does with giving a Certificate Of Airworthiness (COA) to other computer-heavy planes such as – well, most of today's airliners?

The problem is that the software that gets these aircraft into the air runs to well over a million lines of computer language and normally takes hundreds of years of programmer-time to write and debug. How does anyone outside the originating company check something that big? Even if an outside organisation took the job on, they would need a similar-sized software department to the creators to complete it before the next ice age.

Best regards,
T. BYRNE (aeroplane nerd),
Via email.

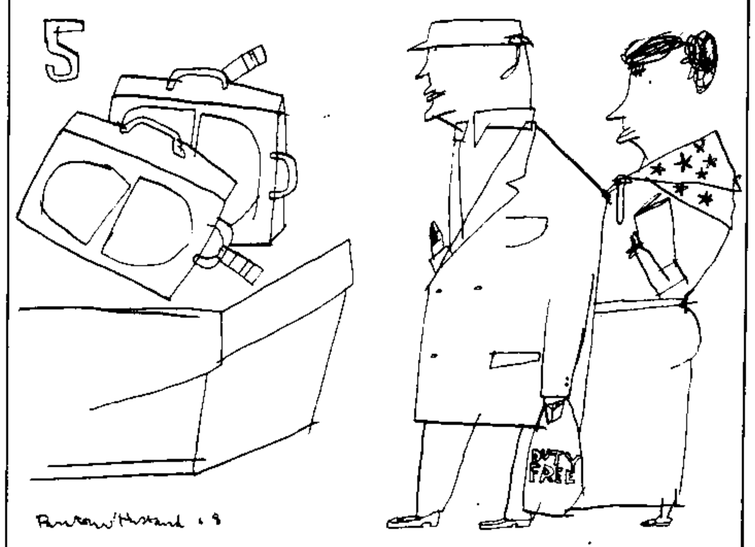
Wig and frown

Sir,

Apparently Lord Phillips is a 'burqa' (geddit?) (page 3, Eye 1214) for stating that private civil disputes may be submitted to a mutually agreed arbitration procedure which could be based on Sharia while obviously still subject to English or Scottish law. It is hard to see why, and given freedom of contract how, the state should intervene to prevent such a practice. The offending photo-bubble is therefore pure 'homburg', and the dismal pun entirely 'surplice' to requirements. Will you now say 'sari' for this ill-considered outburst of tabloid-style muslim-bashing?

TIM WILKINSON.
Via email.

Scenes You Seldom See



"Look, dear. Our bags have come along together"

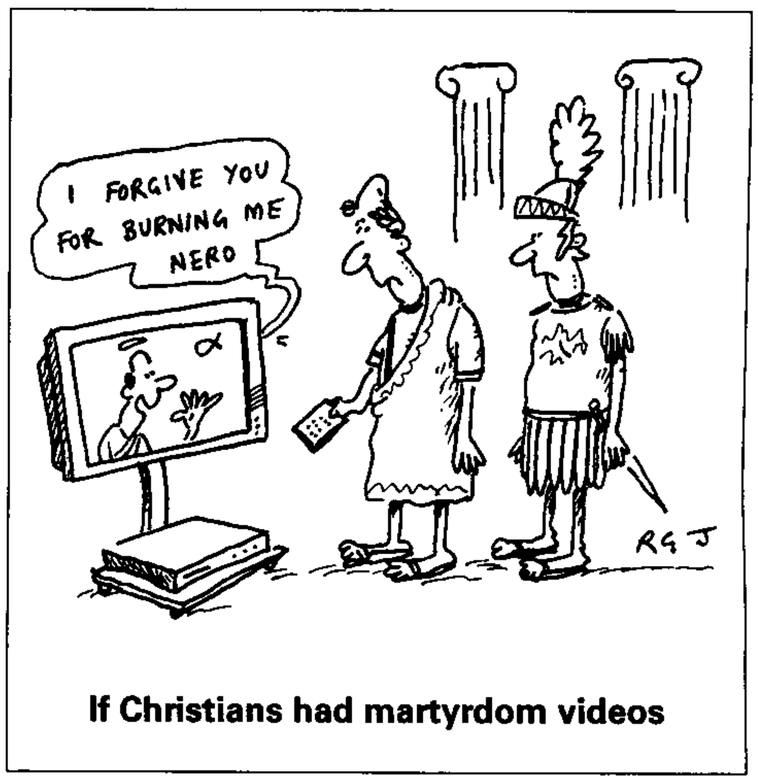
Ratbiter bitten

Sir,

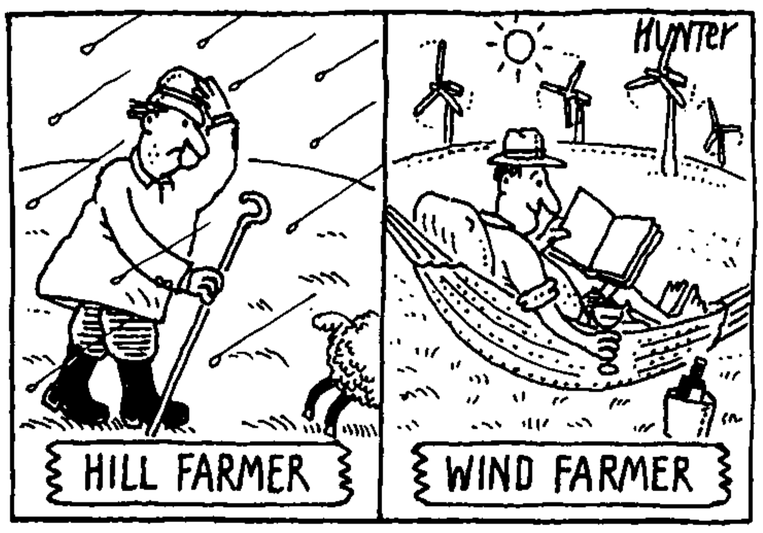
Noam Chomsky, a man who knows a thing or two about the use of language, once stated: "I see no anti-Semitic implications in denial of the existence of gas chambers or even the denial of the Holocaust." Ratbiter, in responding to Mr Kollerstrom, equates Holocaust deniers (an admittedly capacious term) with neo-Nazis and then chastises him for using "neo-Nazi" sources in his work (i.e. Holocaust denying sources which are, therefore, neo-Nazi).

As if this isn't bad enough, Ratbiter (whose original article used a tenuous association with Kollerstrom as a reason to suggest cutting off funding for an Iranian TV station) then goes on to state that the Iranian state "wants to kill all the Jews". Perhaps he could provide readers with a source for this incredible claim. I do hope that he isn't referring to the mistranslation of President Ahmadinejad's statement (see http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2006/jun/14/post155) which has proved so politically useful to the kind of people one relies on the Eye to criticise.

Yours in the hope of publication,
STEFAN DENIS,
Via email.



If Christians had martyrdom videos



Wind and hot air

Sir,

What a muddle-headed fellow is poor old Muckspreader (Eye 1214), and all the more so now that he has nailed his colours to the mast of the anti-wind farm loonies. He now finds himself lauding people who, he tells us himself, have hounded a Norfolk farmer to death; while Muck's main reason for opposing wind farms is a perfect "pull off your nose to spite your face" one, ie. that someone is making even more money from them than farmers; now how can that be right?

That the someone is the industry that raises the capital and actually builds the things, whereas the farmer has to do nothing, doesn't seem to be relevant. Well of course, it doesn't to Muck's generation. They learned their values during the post-war years of feather-bedding of agriculture, when cornucopias of subsidies were emptied over them, while they were left in peace to maim their workers, pollute watercourses, wipe out wildlife, and rip up the landscape. But what really annoys his generation more than anything else is the sight of someone other than a farmer being given a subsidy. As for the arguments against wind farms, he, no doubt unwittingly, falls back on the "fallacy of the heap".

That the current wind energy generation capacity is small does not make it not worthwhile. Even if the total potential for wind energy is only 10 or 20% of our total need, the same is true of all future sources of energy, and if we dismiss each one because it is only a part of the answer, we will have nothing. The supposed widespread opposition to wind farms is not born out by public opinion surveys, rather, a highly vociferous minority of fanatics raises a storm of protest.

CHRIS PADLEY,

Market Rasen, Lincolnshire.

Hospital food

Sir,

I was tickled by the map you printed from the Majorca Tourist Guide (Eye 1214) that showed directions to a local medical centre and its close proximity to Burger King. However, it wasn't the irony that amused, it was the whopper of a distance between the two.

One swift trip to Addenbrooke's Hospital in Cambridge will present you with a branch of the fast-food outlet actually in the hospital itself. It is always saddening to see people walking off the endocrinology and cardiology wards straight to Pizza Trattoria and Burger King every day. Most of them are doctors.

Yours supersizing,
KEIR SHIELS,

Student Doctor, University of Cambridge.

Scene stealer

Sir,

Re Scenes You Seldom See (Eye 1214). Shurely that should have been two doctors in A&E on the same night? Or maybe that's next issue – oops!!

Yours,
COLIN ROBSON,

Via email.

Knocking Knacker

Sir,

Dennis Nilsen might well have been "the biggest (in terms of victims) serial killers we had ever seen". ("White mischief", Letters, Eye 1214) but it would have constituted a dereliction had Peter Jay not deduced that the man was a murderer.

When the drains of a house in Cranley Gardens, Muswell Hill, London,were found to be blocked by what appeared to be human flesh and police were called to the scene it transpired that the house in question was divided into three flats.

One flat was occupied by an apparently well-balanced retired couple, another by a young, gainfully employed man and woman and the third by an eccentric loner who when questioned about his knowledge of the butchered body parts readily admitted his guilt.

It didn't therefore take a stroke of genius to solve the case.

JOHN KENNY,

Acle, Norfolk.

A CALLER rang to state that she was in fact the wife of George IV. Apologies to all. ***The Worthing Sentinel***

Lookalike

Bernie

Anne

Sir,

I can't help noticing the uncanny likeness between the "grieving widow" Anne Darwin and Formula One supremo Bernie Ecclestone.

The jury's out on whether they share the same hairdresser, optician or are simply both having a miserable, grimacing time of late.

Perhaps Ernie should consider investing some of his millions in a televised canoe race?

Yours,
KEVIN WOOLDRIDGE,

Via email.

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

"When the questions are being asked, that's when you come up with the answers."
ALVIN MARTIN, TalkSport Radio
(Michael Charalambous)

"My father introduced me to the world of literacy."
GERI HALLIWELL
(Gareth Cartman)

"After all that practice I just need to turn actions into words."
Young golfer, Sky Sports 2
(Geoffgrey Woburn)

"This is the steepest part of the course and I'm afraid it gets steeper later on."
PHIL LIGGETT, ITV4
(Clive Giles)

"I just have to keep my nose clean, literally, for the first three or four laps tomorrow."
JENSON BUTTON, ITV
(Lance Mitchell)

Spotted on the River Tamar by Roger Latham

Pedantry Corner

Sir,

Much as I enjoyed the cartoon "Oi! You looking at my surd?" (page 9, Eye 1214), I feel duty-bound as a pedant and a mathematician to point out that the surd in the cartoon $2\sqrt{3}+5$, is an ugly version of its far prettier gorgeous pouting equivalent $4\sqrt{2}$, which is what a mathematician would be more inclined to use. A surd as inelegant as the one featured in the cartoon would certainly not attract much vying attention!

STEPHEN NASHEF.

... Does the word "surd" come from the Latin "surdus", meaning dull-sounding?

ENA. B. ERKMANN.

... Edgar Colliander (letters, Eye 1214) is not only dull, but wrong. Fermat's last theorem does indeed state that the equation $X^n + Y^n = Z^n$ has no integral solutions for integer values of n higher than 2.

The special case where n = 3 was proved by Euler over 250 years ago, so I fear Mr Colliander was wasting his time.

PROFESSOR CALCULUS.

... Please tell me I am not the only patriotic Manxman writing in to tell you that the Isle of Man is NOT part of the UK as your graphic on page 22 of issue 1213 implies. I am sure they have enough crime of their own without being burdened with yours. Its not part of Great Britain either, but is in the British Isles.

PETER BROCKLEHURST.

Should Dave Snooty not rig his blade (oar) on the stroke side of the boat (cartoon, Eye 1214)? Or is he more radical than I suspect?

ROD ANDERSON.

... The Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English defines 'opposition' as a noun that takes a singular or plural verb. Robin Philpott (Letters, 1214) prefers "The opposition was soundly beaten." You used "The opposition were soundly beaten." Both are correct. And equally sad.

STEVE ELSWORTH.

... If Robin Philpott (Issue 1214), had spent more time following the Zimbabwe elections, and less time drinking his cider, he would have realised that there was more than one opposition party contesting them. Private Eye was therefore correct – "The opposition were soundly beaten."

TAPIWA SIBANDA.

Letter from **Malabo**

from Our Own Correspondent

IT was a suitably theatrical end to an extraordinary tale when, on 7 July, five months after his extradition from Zimbabwe, Simon Mann – mercenary Old Etonian, ex-army and all-round toff – was sentenced to 34 years for his role in a failed coup here in Equatorial Guinea in 2004.

The charges were well rehearsed. Mann was engaged by Ely Calil, a Lebanese multimillionaire, born in Nigeria now based in London, to replace our president, Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, with Calil's exiled friend, Severo Moto. Mann, helped by Mark Thatcher and others, put together a team of mercenaries from their Cape Town base; but the intelligence services in South Africa and Angola got wind of an extraordinary plan not just to change our government for us but to set up an East India Company-style administration to run our country on behalf of the plotters thereafter. The spooks tipped off the authorities here and in Zimbabwe where a plane was impounded and its cargo of mercenaries/conspirators was arrested in March four years ago.

Happily there has been no mention anywhere in the press of our government's decision last month to abandon plans to pursue a separate civil action in London against the alleged architects of the coup. The list had included Calil and Mann but, strangely, not Thatcher. There was, it seemed, no chance of success. Courts in Guernsey, Lebanon and even Zimbabwe, where Mann was charged only with firearms offences and his fellow plotters immigration violations, had similar problems with the quality of evidence our government produced. In South Africa, prosecutors admitted they had agreed a plea bargain with Thatcher in which there was no mention of Equatorial Guinea or a coup because they felt there was no guarantee of a conviction in court of anything stronger.

The story our leaders have told about the events of 2004 is a good 'un. Better even than the Easter coup plot of two years earlier, when assassins dressed as priests were supposed to knock off the president in Malabo cathedral. But was any of it true?

The courts may have had no time for our version, but happily it was printed keenly by so many in the media who have yet to report any of the anomalies. Media that flew teams across Africa couldn't, it seems, manage to get across London to witness our decision to face the facts and stop pursuing Calil and Mann in court in England. Nor could they explain why Nick Du Toit, leader of the apparent advance party here, was in business with Armengol Nguema, the president's brother, months before the plot was rumbled. No one questioned why Mann chose to begin his confession with a visit to Omar Bongo, veteran president of Gabon, then in the middle of an acrimonious border dispute with Equatorial Guinea.

Calil admits supporting regime change in Equatorial Guinea. He says Severo Moto, an opposition leader based in Madrid, had persuaded him that if he could smuggle himself into the country, he could spark mass protests that would topple the president. But he didn't want to get shot, so wanted protection from someone like Mann. And Calil put Moto and Mann together. According a source close to Calil: "The plan didn't work out that way. But the government had warned Calil against backing Moto months ahead of time. The hatred between Moto and Obiang is enough to explain this vendetta against Calil."

Mann says he has been "a bloody fool", as have been so many caught up in this affair, swallowing any betrayal or fantasy in pursuit of greed or a good story – and leaving behind the true purpose and design of the events of 2004 as murky as we have become accustomed in Equatorial Guinea.

FUNNY OLD WORLD

COMPILED BY **VICTOR LEWIS-SMITH**

● "I got very drunk on New Year's Eve," a florist named Jan-Jan told a press conference in Cebu City [in the Philippines], "and paid a male prostitute 100 pesos for a night of sex. But an argument started when I criticised the size of his wang, and before I knew what was happening, he had shoved an aerosol can of Black Suede body spray right up my bottom, where I could not reach. Then he left. Everything went black and when I awoke next day, I knew something was very wrong. So I told my family what had happened and went to the Vicente Sotto Medical Center, expecting professional courtesy and sympathy for a victim of sexual abuse. But instead, a dozen doctors and nurses stood around pointing and jeering

at me while the can was being removed, and took a video of the entire operation which ended up for several weeks on YouTube."

Speaking on behalf of the hospital, Emmanuel Gines apologised to the patient for what he termed "an unethical and outrageous incident. Behaviour like this makes the medical profession look bad. What happened in the operating room got out of hand. There was no crowd control. Mobile phones were being used to take footage. It won't happen again."

However, Monsignor Achilles Dakay told the Veritas Roman Catholic radio station in Manila that "Jan-Jan is to blame for his own misfortune. It's not just scandalous, it's shameful. People are blaming the doctors for what they did, but I think they should blame the guy for what he did." *(The Manila Times, 24/4/08, and The Sun-Star, 22/4/08. Spotter: Stephen Clein)*

– ● –

● *The Neptune Memorial Reef is the largest man-made reef ever conceived. Located 3.25 miles east of Key Biscayne in Miami, and designed to resemble the lost city of Atlantis, it offers an environmentally-friendly alternative to traditional funerals, and is a living resting place for the departed.*

After cremation, the ashes of your loved one are mixed with water-resistant cement, and moulded into a shape of your choice. A diver then places the concretised remains within one of the columns on the reef, along with a copper and bronze plaque bearing the person's name, and the dates of their birth and death. We call it 'life after life.'

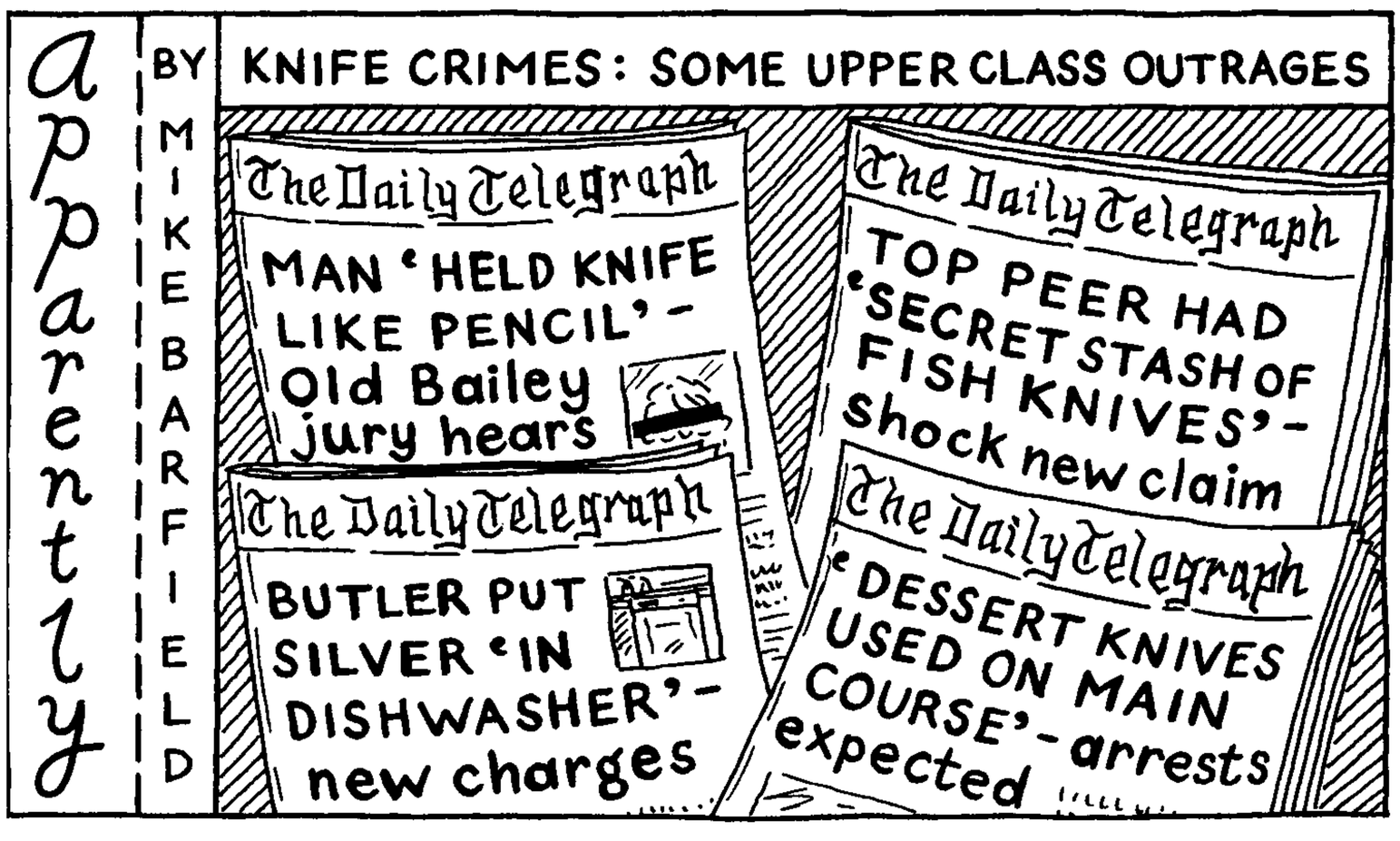
To purchase your placement rights, simply visit our web site, click on the reef map, and make your choice. Placements start at $995 for basic rights, to $6,495 for those who wish to spend eternity inside the base of a lion statue. Family placements are also available.

The Neptune Memorial Reef is owned and managed by Afterlife Services Inc. (www.nmreef.com. Spotter: Brendan Joseph O'Byrne)

– ● –

● "I knew that using passengers' bags is prohibited," an unnamed customs officer admitted to NHK news at Narita airport, Tokyo, "but I wanted to improve the ability of my sniffer dog. So I placed 142 grams of cannabis into the side pocket of a randomly selected black suitcase coming off an international flight from Hong Kong, and ordered my dog to locate it. Unfortunately, he couldn't find it, and by the time he had failed, I had forgotten which suitcase I had put the cannabis in. It seems that I became overconfident in my dog's abilities."

Speaking on behalf of the airport authorities, Manpei Tanaka said, "The case is extremely regrettable, and I would like to deeply apologise. Customs regulations specify that a training suitcase should be used for these narcotics exercises, but I must confess that passengers' suitcases have been used before, though without problems. The cannabis was in a metal box wrapped with newspapers, and the dogs have always been able to find it before, but not this time. It has a street value of 1 million yen, so if by some chance a passenger finds it in their suitcase, we're asking them to return it." *(Money Week, 30/5/08 and AFP, 26/5/08. Spotter: Michael Plumbe)*


Apparently
BY MIKE BARFIELD
KNIFE CRIMES: SOME UPPER CLASS OUTRAGES
The Daily Telegraph
MAN 'HELD KNIFE LIKE PENCIL' - Old Bailey jury hears
The Daily Telegraph
BUTLER PUT SILVER 'IN DISHWASHER' - new charges
The Daily Telegraph
TOP PEER HAD 'SECRET STASH OF FISH KNIVES' - shock new claim
The Daily Telegraph
'DESSERT KNIVES USED ON MAIN COURSE' - arrests expected

PRIME MINISTERIAL DECREE NO. 25

From the Beach Hut of the Supreme Leader (Southwold, Britain)

Comrades!

As you will see from the above, I am taking a working holiday with Comrade Mrs Brown here at our British seaside.

Comrades will not need me to point out the contrast between my own frugal and patriotic behaviour and the seasonal antics of the discredited former leader ex-Comrade Blair.

Year after year, we were treated to the degrading spectacle of his parasitic sponging on a procession of plutocrats and pop singers, each involving a lengthy stay in some grandiose sun-drenched foreign villa, where Madame Blair could indulge her depraved lust for the trappings of wealth and luxury.

Here in Southwold the picture could not be more different. As the honest rain of Britain pours down, I sit in my modest seaside dacha working round the clock on my new initiatives for building the Age of Change.

My needs are simple. A table, a chair and a kettle for the occasional cup of honest British tea (made of course from GB Tips).

In this respect, I am giving a lead to all other British workers, as we confront the most challenging period our economy has faced for eleven years.

And, again, I will not insult comrades' intelligence by pointing out the obvious reason why we are suddenly beset with such difficulties.

For ten years after 1997, under my own inspired and prudent helmsmanship, the British economy prospered as never before in history.

As soon as I was forced to hand over my responsibilities in order to become Supreme Leader at the unanimous wish of the entire nation, all my good work was rapidly undone.

Within weeks we were facing a crisis of unparalleled magnitude, thanks to the bungling incompetence of my subordinates, chief amongst whom I must name as Comrade Darling.

Due to his glaring ineptitude and his reversion to the long discredited doctrines of Thatchero-Majorist boom-and-bustims, we have seen our once great country swiftly return to the darkest days of the 1970s.

Inflation is soaring, unemployment is on the rise, Trotskyite state employees are staging their "summer of discontent" over their irresponsible wage demands. Uncollected rubbish piles up in the street, giant rats roam freely, attacking small children in their cots, and a disaffected and ungrateful populace turn on the one man who is in no way to blame for any of this... your Supreme Leader.

Fortunately, the Supreme Leader is also the only man who can clear up the mess created by my once trusted lieutenant, Comrade Darling, who has now confessed to his failure to live up to my hopes for him and has begged for my personal forgiveness in return for a pledge of undying loyalty to myself and to no one else who might think that they were capable of taking on the Supreme Leadership at this very difficult time.

I do not, of course, need to point out to Comrades the names of those to whom I refer, but the identity of these cardboard conspiracists and neo-Blairite plotters is scarcely a national secret. I refer, of course, to the following renegades, namely Comrades Harman, Straw, Miliband and the aptly-named Comrade Balls.

It is a measure of your Supreme Leader's magnanimity that all these treacherous and inadequate Commissars will be permitted to stay on in their posts.

But I warn them that the eye of the Supreme Leader is ever vigilant, and that I have recalled to my team the formerly discredited Comrade Alastair Campbell, who writes below:

Comrade Scumbags! The Supreme Leader and I may have had our differences in the past. I quite rightly called him a "dangerous psychopath", which he feebly rebutted by calling me "a foul-mouthed drunk". But these differences of policy now lie in the past. What matters now is that we, all of us, owe our loyalty to the great party which it is our privilege to serve. Therefore, despite my currently punishing schedule of commitments to sitting at home and watching the Dave channel, I have agreed to take up arms once again to help the Supreme Leader extricate himself from the hole which he personally has

(unfortunately, there is insufficient space to reproduce all of Comrade Campbell's typically forthright and very welcome comments, but suffice it to say that he knows where you all live and, thanks to Google Earth, is watching you at all times of the day and night).

Signed

Gordon Brown

The Supreme Leader

THE STATE VISIT OF COMRADE PRESIDENT ELECT BARACK OBAMA

All comrades look forward to posing for photographs with the esteemed Comrade Obama when he flies in to Britain for crucial talks.

Comrade Obama with his slogan "Time for Change" will be here to observe at first hand the success of the Age of Change in this country – in particular with regards to Foreign Policy.

The discredited former leader brought shame on our great movement by his lickspittle toadying to the warmongering imperialist Bush by taking troops into Iraq.

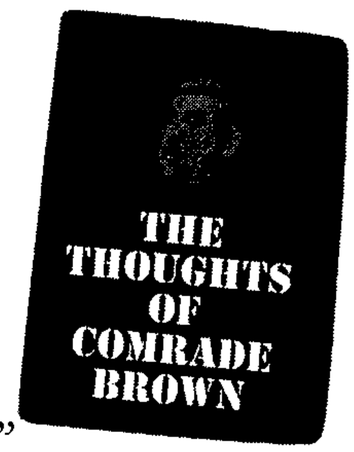
How different will be our own approach to the Americans. When Comrade Obama tells us to pull our troops out we will frankly and fearlessly comply with his demands at once.

Time for a change indeed.

From The Little Brown Book

"Neither a lender nor a borrower be – except when you have to be a borrower and you haven't got any more money left to lend anyone"

Taken from the Thoughts of Gordon Brown, Chapter 94, "The Limits of Economic Consistency In the Age of Changing your Mind"



Pleze do not sak me Gordon becoz i did nuffink wrong honest innit? It was all the forlt of the curricu currucu correc those bastards wot are to blame you know, for hirin them yanks who cant speak English and that yeh? So pleeze can I stay on I am your only frend

NEW SATS ROW OVER MARKING DISCREPANCY

by Our Education Staff **Phil BothsidesofthePaper**

THE education system received another blow yesterday with the publication of a test paper which received a pass mark of 110% when experts agreed that it should have failed.

The candidate, the 14-year-old Ed Balls (who cannot be named for legal reasons) answered the question 'Should I keep my job?' and wrote as follows:

"Pleze do not sak me Gordon becoz i did nuffink wrong, honest innit? It woz all the forlt of the curricu... currucu... correc... those bastards wot are to blame you know, for hirin them yanks who cant speak English and that yeh? So pleze can I stay on I am yore only frend."

The examiner, Mr G Brown, gave the candidate top marks for 'grovelling, buckpassing and toadying'. He called the essay 'a delightful piece of creative writing worthy of the Booker Prize for fiction'.

Educationalists however expressed concern about the spelling. One said, "This could spell the end for Mr Balls."

● Full story page 10.

Advertisement

DVD OFFER

GREAT BRITISH CLASSICS

GOODBYE, MR BALLS

(PG 2008)

Heart-rending school-based weepie telling the story of the much misunderstood Ed Balls, who is put in charge of all the schools in the country and stays in the job for an unprecedented 40 minutes.

Initially out of his depth he earns the respect of no-one at all until the headmaster, Mr Brown says, "You've had your chips, so it's goodbye Mr Balls."

CAST IN FULL

Mr Balls ..... **Robert Donat**

Mrs Balls ..... **Vivien Leigh**

Mr Brown ..... **Andrew Cruickshank**

Cheeky Boy..... **The Young Stephen Fry**

GLENDA SLAGG

FLEET STREET'S 'MAMMA MIAOW'!?!

■ HATS OFF (and everything else) to Helen Mirren, proving that there's nothing like a Dame – even when you're 62!?!! Forget your scrawny supermodels!?! Here's a gal who's busting out all over, even though she's got a free bus pass!?! No wonder all the guys are a-peerin' and a-leerin' when they see Her Majesty the Queen showing the "crown jewels" in her bikini!?!!?

■ HELEN MIRREN – what a disgrace!?!! Cover yourself up, grandma, for gawd's sake!?! Who do you think you are – some kind of supermodel?!?? I tell you what, Dame OAP, I bet even the Queen looks better than you in a bikini – and she's over 80!?!!

■ TRACEY EMIN!?! Aren'tchasick of her?!?? BritArt's multi-millionaire is a-whingein' and a-cringein' just because she's got no little nipper to look after when she goes home at night!?!! I'll tell you why, Tracey!?!! We've all seen your unmade bed in the Tate Gallery!?! And what red-blooded male is going to want to get in it along with you and your dirty knickers and your used condoms?!? No one, love. Pass the sick bag, Tracey!?!

■ SPARE A THOUGHT for poor Tracey Emin, who through no fault of her own finds herself all alone and unloved, without a little toddler to tuck up in her unmade bed at night!?! Come on, guys, which one of you is going to give sexy Tracey the bun in the oven she so desperately craves?!?? Just shut your eyes and think of BritArt?!? Geddit?!?

■ FOR GAWD'S SAKE give it a rest, Grandad!?! It's John Cleese I'm talkin' about, stoopid!?! I don't believe it!?! He's only gone and done it again – run off with an American floozy young enough to be his granddaughter!?! Fawlty Towers?! More like Fawlty Brainbox!?! No offence. And isn't it time that your python was dead, ceased to be, was no more!?!!? Geddit?!?

■ HATS OFF to John Cleese!!?! He's the rib-ticklin' Romeo that gets gals a-gaggin' and a-shaggin' every time he does a funny walk into the room!!?! There's nothing Fawlty with his python!?! Geddit?!? So, all together everyone – let's all Look on the Bright Side of Wife!?!! Geddit?!?

■ HERE THEY ARE – Glenda's Summer Sizzlers!?!

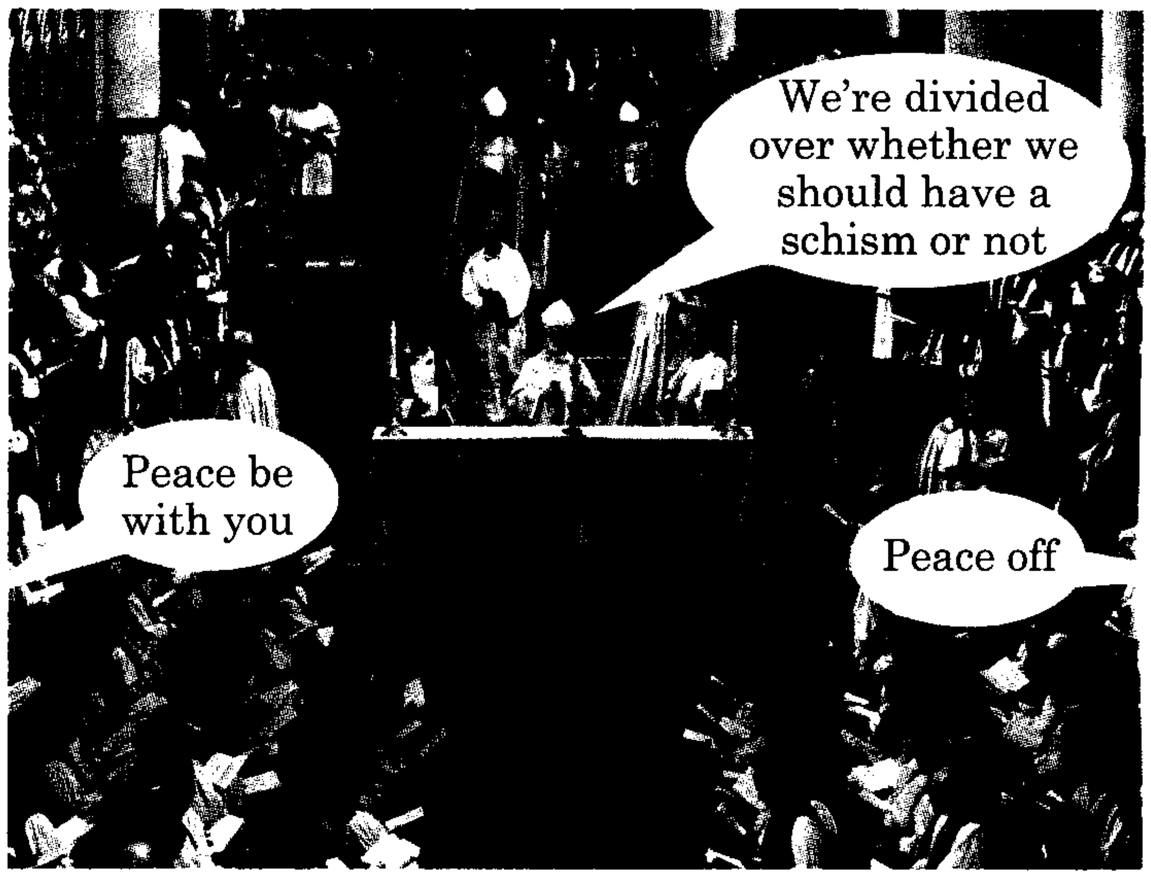
● **Padraig Harrington.** You can come and give me a hole in one anytime!?! I'm Open!?! Geddit!!

● **Roger Alton.** He's the sex-crazed new editor of the *Indie!?! You* can put me to bed any day, Big Roger, and give me a good ride on the Alton Tower!??! Mmmmm!?!

● **A.N. Wilson.** Crazy name, crazy guy!?!

Byeee!!

CHURCH IN TURMOIL



Exclusive to all newspapers

STATE FUNERAL FOR GORDON BROWN

by Our Court Staff
Damien Hearse and
Iain Duncan-Coffin

SECRET plans have been drawn up, we can reveal, for an elaborate State funeral for the former Prime Minister Gordon Brown.

In recent days there have been extensive consultations at the highest level, involving the Queen, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Lord Mayor of London, to approve arrangements for Mr Brown's funeral as soon as possible.

Said a Downing Street spokesman, "We know nothing about this."

However, as the news spread, old-age pensioners and toddlers alike joined Labour MPs in hailing the scheme as an appropriate tribute to Britain's most hopeless statesman of all time.

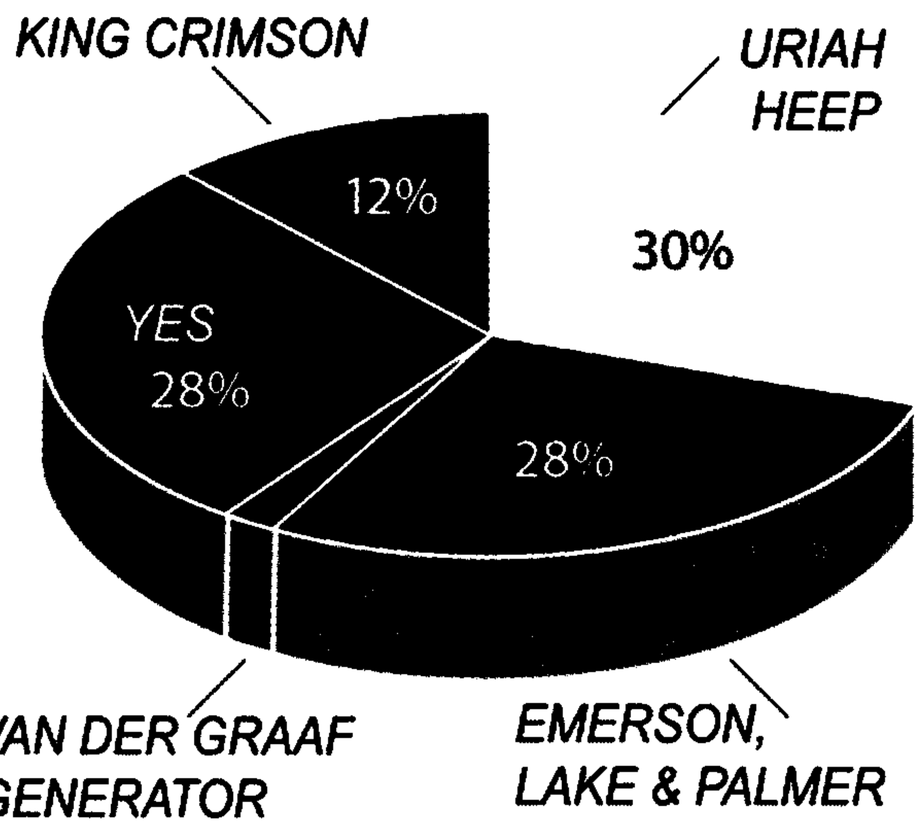
What you will see

- Brown will lie in state for two hours in the Kirkcaldy funeral parlour of McDeath & Co.
- Members of the public (Sid and Doris McBonkers) will file past shaking their fists and shouting, "Gie us back our 10p, ye thievin' bastard!"
- The coffin will then be taken to Dundee Crematorium by mini-cab, for a short service of thanksgiving (Speaker The Rev. T. Blair, former Vicar of St Albion's).

- Mr Brown's ashes will then be ceremonially scattered on a nearby windfarm while a lone piper (A. Campbell) plays a traditional Highland lament 'The Grey Gordons'.
- A modest collation of cold meats will be served to any mourners (see above) at the Ramada Thistle Hotel, Fife (£27.50 per head, payable at door – no credit cards).
- Parts of the ceremony will be broadcast on Grampian TV's 'News Extra' at 11.45pm.

Last night Lady Thatcher was "unavailable for comment" but said, "It's far too early to be talking about Mr Cameron in this way."

THIS WEEK'S POLL: Which '70s prog rock band does Gordon Brown remind you of?



BLAIR'S VISIT TO GAZA
History Made

by Our Man In Israel **Simon Halfa**

HISTORY was made today when for the first time ever Tony Blair failed to visit Gaza to see life in Palestine at first-hand.

Mr Blair has been asked by world leaders to bring about a peace settlement between Israel and Palestine, thus solving tension in the Middle East for once and for all.

For six months, since taking up his exacting two-day-a-week job, Mr Blair has been considering making the arduous one-mile journey from Israel to Gaza to assess the situation for himself.

There were high hopes on all sides that Mr Blair's visit would mark a wholly new phase in the sad history of conflict between the two peoples.

Fearless

But no sooner had Mr Blair's car begun its historic journey than it had to turn around again.

Mr Blair's adviser had received a tip-off from Israeli intelligence services that if he continued on his journey he might well be assassinated by themselves for trying to cause peace in the region.

Said one aide, "We took this warning very seriously and we shall be planning another visit in two years time."

Han-z-z-zard

Prime Minister's Question Time

Mr David Cameron *(Bullingdon, Con)*: In the light of the Prime Minister's latest U-turn on fuel tax, as well as all his other recent U-turns, would he not agree (*pause for effect*) that he is totally **U**-seless?

(*Tories erupt in hysterical laughter at extraordinary example of parliamentary wit*)

Mr Gordon Brown *(Dunblairin, Lab)*: As usual, the Leader of the Opposition is completely overlooking the fact that the economic record of this government over the last ten years has shown a *(cont. 94 hours)*

The Speaker, Mick McGorbals *(for it is he)*: Hear! Hear! After that fascinating lecture from the Prime Minister which has certainly put the Tories in their place, may we turn to the much more important matter of our allowances as honourable Members of this House; and the disgraceful behaviour of the media in finding out just how much we have all been fleecing the taxpayers.

(Cries from all parts of the House of "Hear, Hear", "Sue", "Bring in Carter-Ruck", "String up the journalists".

The House then emptied as Members dispersed by taxi to John Lewis to buy vital kitchen equipment and plasma screen TVs for their second homes.)

"He donated his money to medical research and his body to you"

APPEAL

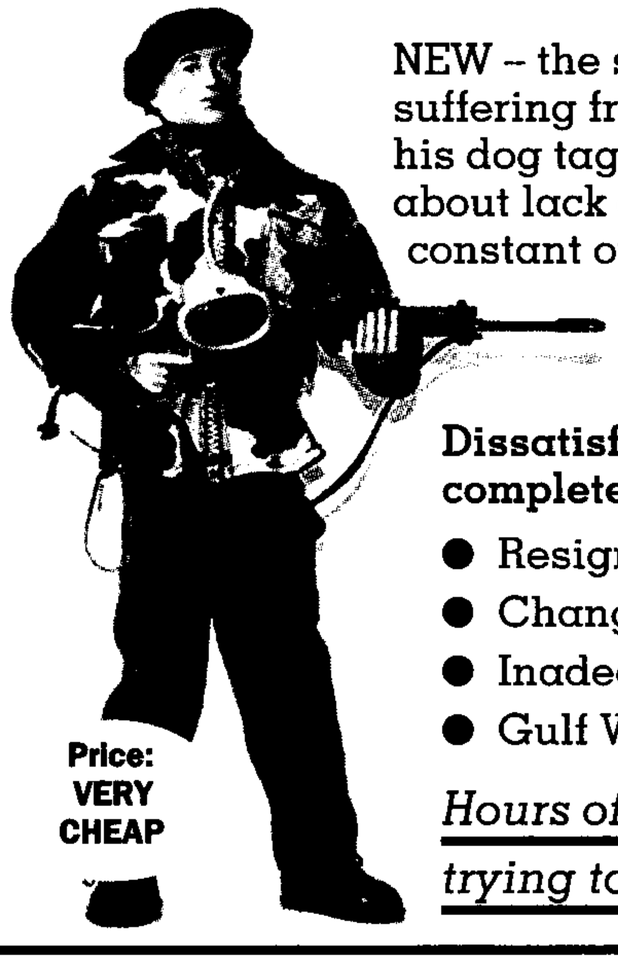
HAVE YOU SEEN MONEY?

A few days ago, our Money disappeared from our bank account overnight. We thought that it was safe but tragically our Money went missing. Do you think it was chief suspect Robert Murat who took our Money? Did you see him lurking around the courts and carrying a huge bundle of notes under his arm? Just call 0870 550 000 and help us track down the whereabouts of our precious Money...

(That's enough bad taste...) *© All newspapers*

Advertisement

DISSATISF-ACTION MAN™



NEW – the soldier who is suffering from low morale. Pull his dog tag and he complains about lack of equipment, constant overstretch, poor conditions and unsatisfactory aftercare.

Dissatisf-Action Man comes complete with:

- Resignation letter
- Change into civilian clothes
- Inadequate pension
- Gulf War Syndrome

Hours of Fun (damentalists trying to kill you!)

Price: VERY CHEAP

POETRY CORNER

In Memoriam – Baked

So. Farewell
Then the word 'Baked'
As in 'Heinz Baked
Beans'.

You have been
Dropped, and from now
On it will be just
'Heinz Beans'.

As Keith says,
This is a very
Half-baked
Idea.

E.J. Thribb (57)

MODERN INN SIGNS

It's Your Line To Red Ken On LBC

Caller: Hello, Ken. It's Roy from Royston. Is there going to be an end to this house price nightmare? I mean, I reckon my place has lost at least 20 grand since I've been talking to you which might put me into negative equity. What's your view?

Ken: Boris has got it wrong again, accusing me of misappropriating Londoners' money. The real scandal is the vote-rigging that led to the Tory victory. I mean, Mugabe's got nothing on Boris.

Caller: That's not exactly what I meant Ken. I was talking about house prices...

Ken: Thank you caller. It's good to know I have your support. Our next caller is Wanda from Wandsworth.

Wanda: Hello, Ken.

Ken: What's your point, Wanda?

Wanda: What do you think of these wind farms on the Thames Estuary, Ken? I mean, what's all that about?

Ken: Exactly my point, Wanda. Boris' idea of bringing back the routemaster is just pie in the sky. I've already looked at this in depth and everything points to the bendy bus which, as all Londoners know, is a big success.

Wanda: Thank you, Ken.

Ken: I've got David from Brent on the line.

David: Ken, some people are saying you are just like that sad bloke in The Office on TV – you know the one I mean, who gets the sack but can't keep away. Do you see yourself like that, Ken?

Ken: Under the Labour administration we reduced the London pigeon population by 27 percent which meant an accrual of health benefits to Londoners of over

(cont. 94kHz)

THE BROON-ITES
THE SCOTTISH SIMPLETONS SCUPPERING THE SUMMER!
Fountain and Jamieson
SEAVIEW HOTEL
CASINO
AH TELL YE ANGUS. I KEN GLOBAL WARMING IS A LOAD O' BOAK. THE GREAT BRITISH HOLIDAY IS AS LOUSY AS IT EVER WAS...
AYE MORAG, IT IS THAT. BUT US TWA, WE HAVTAE BLAME OORSELVES FER THAT...
WHY DAE WE HAVE TAE SIT THIS CLOSE TO HIM?
DAILY JOCK BY ELECTION RESULTS THE NOO
SHINE!
BLAZE!
SUN OIL
BURNING BACON SIZZLE!
WELCOME TO SUNNY SOUTHWOLD
HENRY DAVIES

SURGEONS TO GET 'NO-KILL FEE'

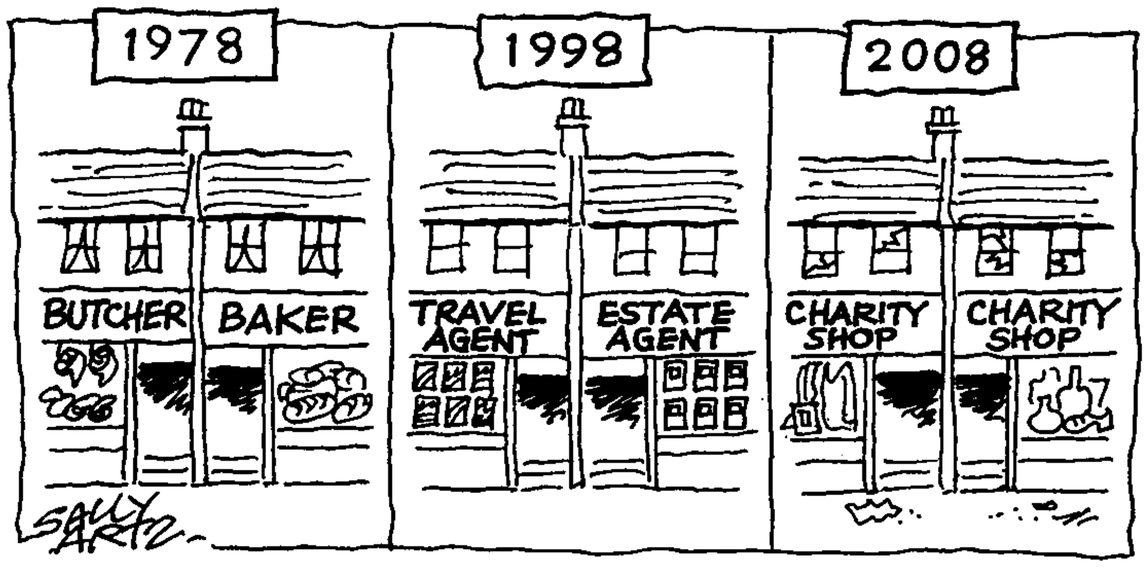
by Our Political Staff **Phil Coffin**

IN A bold new initiative, NHS surgeons will be given a special bonus if their patients survive their operation.

There will be a further bonus should the patient fail to contract one of the choice of superbugs now available to all hospital patients.

A Doctor Writes

MORE and more doctors are experiencing the benefits of an annual injection of money, or *Bonus porschus 911* to give it the full medical name. What happens is that the doctor may be feeling tired, depressed and out of sorts with an unhealthy bank balance. This is quickly remedied by a simple painless shot of cash into the wallet, following which the doctor will experience a sense of wellbeing and an agreeable holiday in the Algarve.
© A Doctor.



'Banksy' Revealed To Be Respectable Middle-Class Professional Man

by Our Street Art Staff
Dame Mural Spark

ONE of the longest-running mysteries in Britain's cultural life was solved yesterday when the artist known only as "Banksy" was revealed to be Mr Mervyn King, a quiet, bespectacled Governor of the Bank of England.

When he was finally unmasked in his Threadneedle Street office, the Cambridge graduate admitted, "Yes, I am Banksy – and the writing is on the wall for the British economy."

● *Full story, p. 94.*

JACQUI SMITH LAUNCHES 42-POINT PLAN TO SLASH KNIFE CRIME

That plan in full

1 Leaflet to be sent to every household showing picture of knife.

2 All schools to introduce knife awareness courses, starting at age 5, leading to Diploma in Anti-Knife Studies as part of Key Stage 7 (age 11-12).

3 Knife manufacturers must display written warning on all knives, 'Knives Can Kill'.

4 Government to appoint 'Knife Czar' to co-ordinate and drive forward all aspects of anti-knife policy.

5 Any teenagers found in possession of a knife to be taken to a knife shop to see for themselves how sharp they are.

6 Nationwide poster and cinema campaign, costing £50 million, and featuring role-model David Beckham, centred on the slogan 'Give up knife crime – let's have a stab at it".

7 New punative 50p knife tax to be imposed on all knives above 2mm long – and, lest it be thought discriminatory, on forks and spoons as well.

8 A week-long 'knife amnesty' whereby any teenager who voluntarily hands in a knife at the designated local 'Knife Amnesty Point' will be rewarded with a 'rock' of crack cocaine.

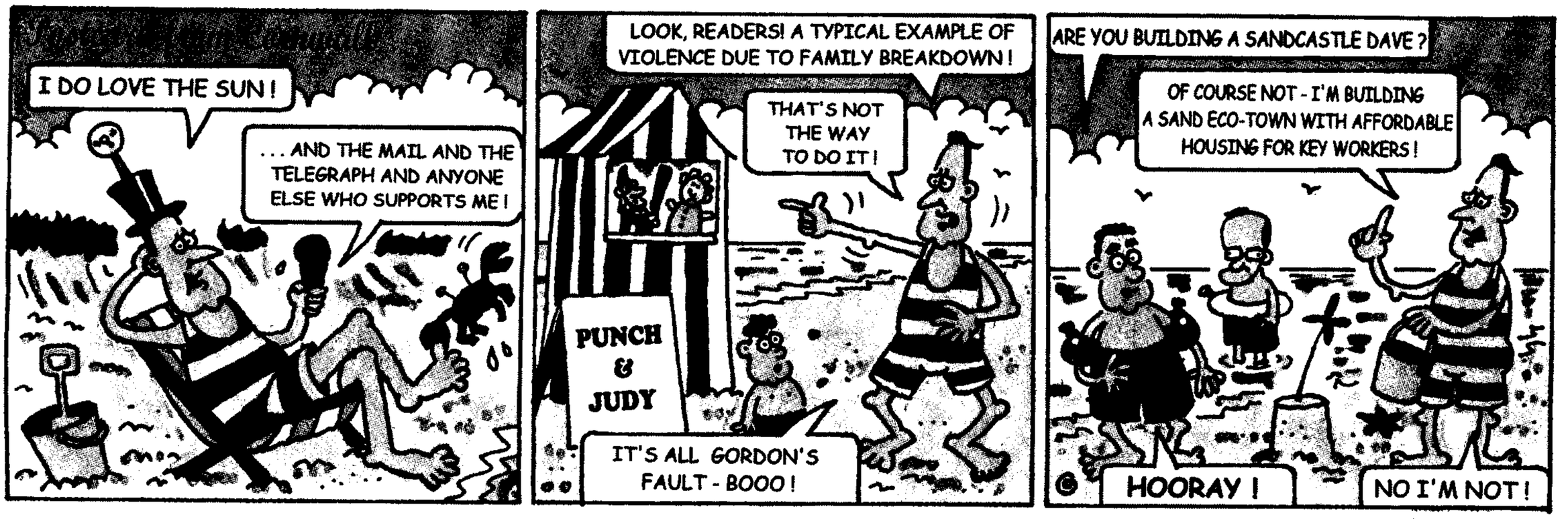
9 ...er...

10 ...more parental involvement...

11 ...that's it.

"I hope your father's alright – I know the grandchildren can be a bit of a handful!

Dave Snooty AND HIS PALS


I DO LOVE THE SUN!
. . . AND THE MAIL AND THE TELEGRAPH AND ANYONE ELSE WHO SUPPORTS ME!
LOOK, READERS! A TYPICAL EXAMPLE OF VIOLENCE DUE TO FAMILY BREAKDOWN!
THAT'S NOT THE WAY TO DO IT!
PUNCH & JUDY
IT'S ALL GORDON'S FAULT - BOOO!
ARE YOU BUILDING A SANDCASTLE DAVE?
OF COURSE NOT - I'M BUILDING A SAND ECO-TOWN WITH AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR KEY WORKERS!
HOORAY!
NO I'M NOT!

*"I'm simply worried **sick** about this whole female bishop furore"*

More and more people these days are discovering the joys of sado-masochistic erotic practices in the privacy of their own home

Organise your own S & M orgy this summer!

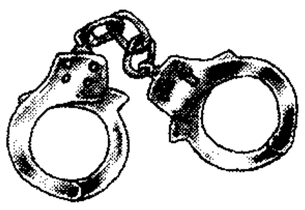
Once regarded as perverse and unnatural, S & M has now become a mainstream leisure pursuit, as respectably English as croquet or fondue.

What you need to stage your own fun-filled orgy

1. Selection of whips obtainable from any reputable high street whip store, such as Whips R Us, World of Whips and Mr Whippy.

2. Selection of prison camp uniforms. We recommend Tesco's Own-brand German Officer Outfit (£27.99).

3. Genuine Military Police-Surplus handcuffs are essential (cheaper brands are too easy to escape from). Available on e-Bay from £105 upwards.

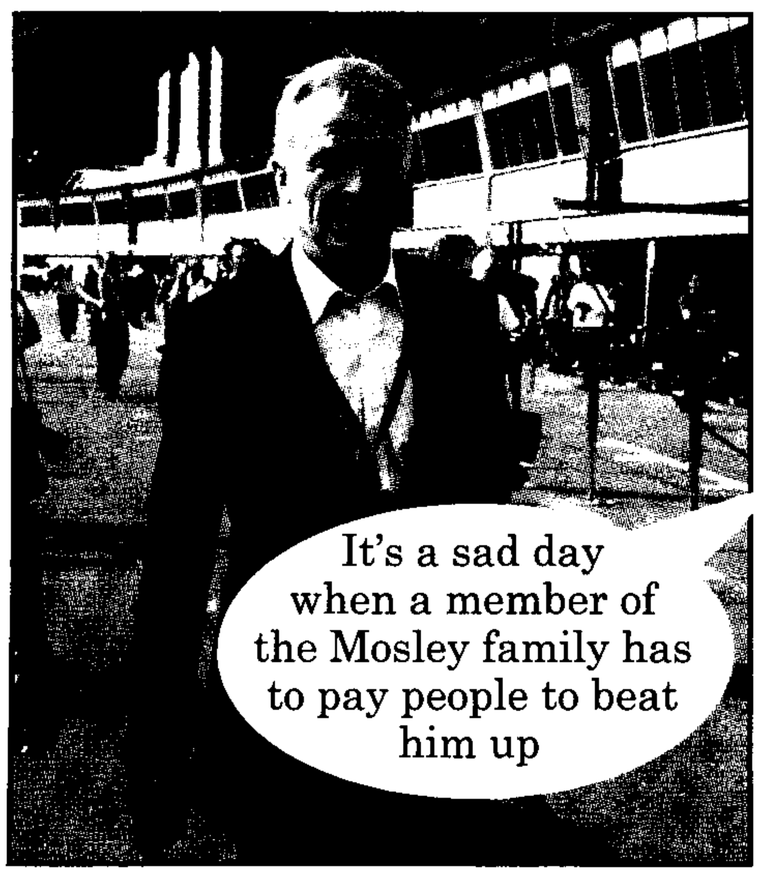


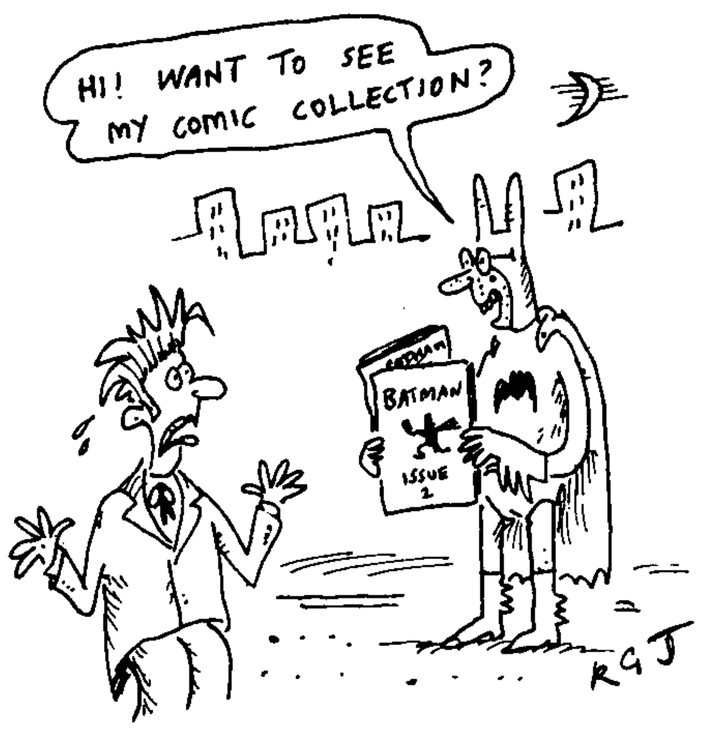
4. A fully-qualified 'dominatrix' is crucial to any successful S & M evening – do shop around. We recommend Rent-a-Dom of Filth Street, Soho, or the high street chain Thrashers if you want a budget version. Make sure your dominatrix is a certified member of the British Dominatrix Association, and complies with all the relevant health and safety legislation.

5. First-aid box and fully equipped operating theatre are essential. S & M can cause serious injury or even death, so make sure you have full medical back-up!

Have a really unpleasant, painful evening!

It certainly makes a change from having a barbecue on your patio or watching *EastEnders*!





"Oh no! The Dork Knight!"

From The Message Boards

Members of the online community respond to the major issues of the day...

State funeral for Margaret Thatcher

she is entitle-d to a state funerel like evrybody else but you woud think she could of afford-ed to go private, may-be get a nicer grave? – ***Darling_Deneyze***

Thatcher sort-ed this country out and took on the union's and one. before she became priminister the labour govement was held to randsom by the workers and they COUD'NT BERRY THE DEAD. now once more history is repeting itself againe, a use-less labour goverment with public servise workers on strike. this crazy idea of a cheap state funurel will making her a hostage of the grave diggers againe. learn "from" history, like I did at uni – ***The_special_one***

War memorials vandalised

Well done the lady who stood up to the yobb's they was vandals-izing the warmermoral an they must throw the hook at the scrotes that done the vandle-ism. but the goverment has got it wrong "they" go on aboat desining out crime to discoarage griffetti but we have thousand's of warmermoral's with peopel's name's all over them. it is an open invetation for yob's to write there name's on there 2 or should I say tags in case the little darlins are street artists like bonksy – ***Broken_Britan***

Jail for sex-on-the-beach Brit

I know that rules are rules, and she knew what she was letting herself in for when she went to Dubai. When in Rome, etc. I'm no admirer of these smutty cocktail names either, let alone a "sex on the beach". Still, six years seems a bit harsh for a mere drink. – ***Gerald***

its a disgrace and wat is the british embassie doin aboat it? NOTH-ING in case they "effend the" muslim's. it is a barbar-ic coantry wher they cut off peple's head's an hand's an but OH! wat a serprise! ● its all ok becaus they are muslim's! an now look they sre locking up us English know-ing r weak labour goverment and diplamat's will do NOTH-ING ● – ***Eye_4_an_eye***

Council workers strike

My bin is full and the dustmen are on strike. Meanwhile it's business as usual for Bottler Brown, spending millions of pounds on benefits for friends of Bin Laden to spread their putrid rubbish. Well, Mister Bottler, what about my BIN LADEN with putrid rubbish? – ***Brown_out***

'Chav' is an offensive term says think tank

What would they prefer to be called – scrotes? ☺ – ***City_trader***

gippo's ☺ lol! – ***Hunny_pot***

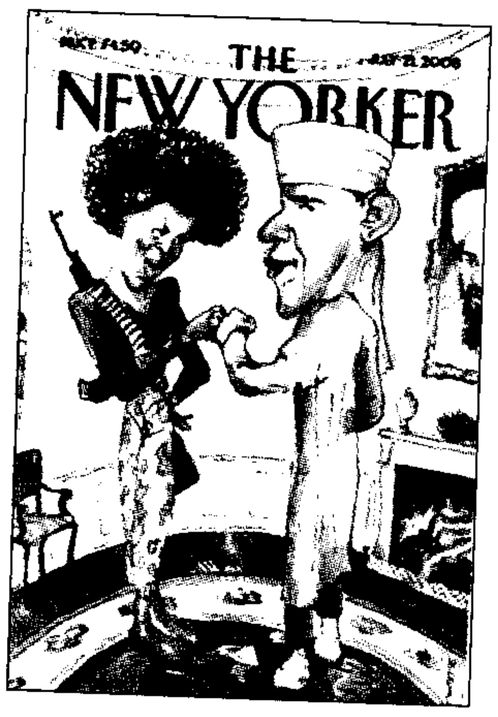
pikey's! – ***Prima_Donut***

Filthy uneducated feckless stinking junky council estate scum. – ***Jon***

Great stuff guys! – ***Bogbrush***

Bogbrushes – ***Jon***

World 'Shocked And Offended' By New Yorker Cartoon



by Our New Yorker Staff **Al Gonquin**

A WAVE of revulsion swept round the entire world yesterday when the latest edition of the prestigious New Yorker magazine hit the stands.

The focus of global outrage was a cartoon on the front cover showing Barack Obama and his wife Michelle dressed as terrorists, with a photo of Osama bin Laden on their living room wall.

Said the entire world, "This is appalling. We have never seen a cartoon as badly drawn and unfunny as this, even in the New Yorker."

NEW PRIVACY THREAT FROM GOOGLE

by Our I.T. Staff **Janet Street-View**

THE INTERNET giant Google was plunged into fresh controversy yesterday following the announcement of its new service, "Google Toilet".

This allows users to go online and download images of their neighbours on the toilet.

Protesters say that "Google Toilet" represents an invasion of privacy and have tried to prevent the millions of Google cameras now coming up out of lavatory bowls to film unsuspecting members of the public.

But Google were unrepentant. "This is a simple service that we are providing for our users – we are expanding the boundaries of knowledge and satisfying a genuine demand for online toilet-based images," said a spokesman.

"There is no question of privacy infringement," he continued, "because, thanks to us, you don't have any any more."

Google Toilet is available at www.poogle/having a slash/now-wwwashyourhandsplease.con.

IN THE COURTS

Sir Max Mosley vs the *News Of The World*. Before Mr Justice Cocklecarrot. Day 94.

(After closing speeches for both sides, the Judge gave his summing-up)

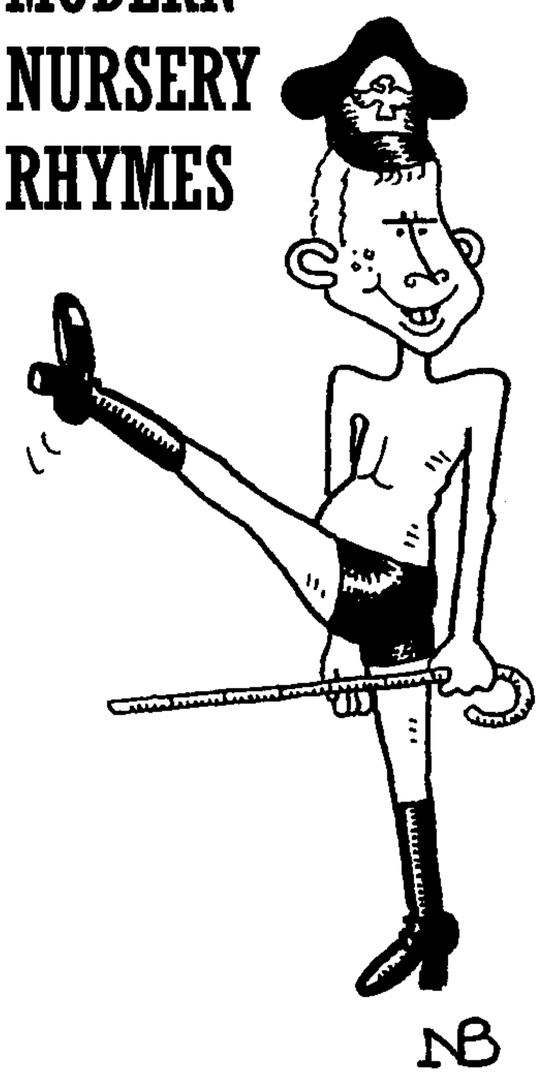
Mr Justice E.D. Cocklecarrot: I have heard the submissions from learned counsel in this vexed case involving Sir Whacks Mosley and the notorious Sunday newspaper, the *News of the Screws*.

Sir Ephraim Hugeprice has argued very plausibly that his client Sir Spanks is entitled to full privacy in pursuit of his sexual appetites, however bizarre or unusual these might appear to the unworldly onlooker. Sir Hartley Redtop, on the other hand, representing the gutter press, has put in a feeble and highly unconvincing argument on behalf of his client, claiming that it was somehow in the public interest to read about what a private individual, in this case Sir Blue Max, may or may not have done with various scantily clad young ladies brandishing whips.

This is a highly complex case involving very important issues of law, which is why I shall need more time to look again at the evidence – particularly the video which we all found so helpful last week.

I shall therefore be taking it home to give it careful study over the next week or so, after which I shall deliver my verdict in favour of Sir Muesli.

MODERN NURSERY RHYMES



Orgy Porgie, pudding and pie,
Spanked the girls and made them cry.
When they gave the game away,
Orgy Porgie cried foul play.

EXCLUSIVE TO ALL PAPERS

MEMBER OF THE ROLLING STONES LEAVES WIFE FOR TWENTY-YEAR-OLD WAITRESS

On Other Pages

☐ Bears defecate during extensive tour of woods.

☐ Pope cuts album about being a Catholic.

Advertisement

New from Apple

THE SENSATIONAL iCantgetone 3G

This incredible new product from Apple is a breakthrough in modern mobile phone technology and avoids **all** the pitfalls of rival technologies.

- ***No annoying ringtone***
- ***No annoying viruses***
- ***No annoying phone calls***
- ***No annoying phone***

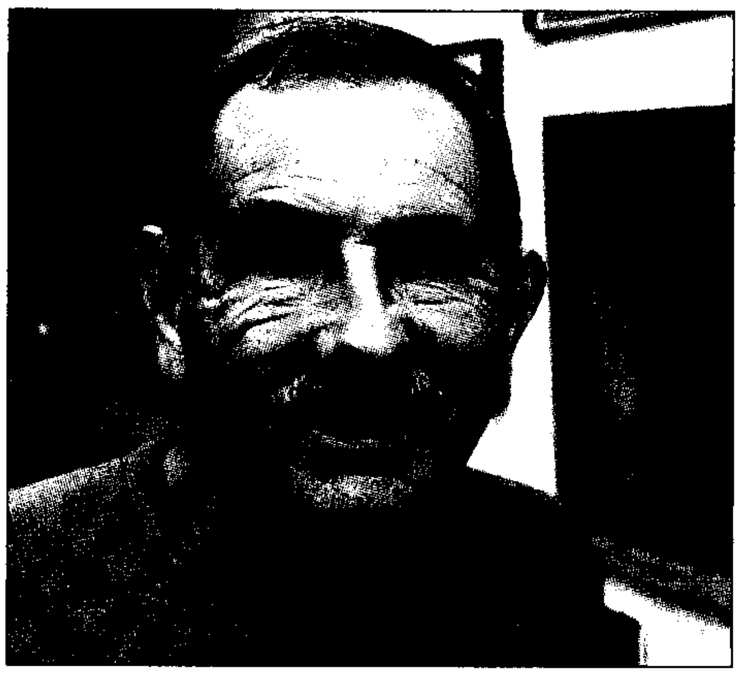
YES! It's not in the shops NOW

The **iCantgetone** costs just an incredible £0 because it's not available anywhere

the PREMIERSH*TS

I CAN'T WAIT FOR THE NEW SEASON TO START, I'M SO BORED!
I KNOW...
TEDIOUS ISN'T IT!
SKY
NEWS
RONALDO TO LEAVE UTD
RONALDO TO STAY AT UTD
LATEST: RONALDO MAY LEAVE UTD
RONALDO UPDATE: REAL MADRID PLAYERS DON'T WANT HIM!
I'M WITH ALL THE NEWS ON RONALDO...

DIARY



CONFESSIONS OF A COLLECTOR
BY HUNTER DAVIES

Don't remember the first time I cut my toenails for myself. But, yes, now you mention it, I do remember the second.

I know exactly when it was because I sellotaped them into my toenail cuttings book. Complete with time and date when cut.

Just fancy that. Makes for fascinating browsing of a Saturday night. Hundreds – correction, thousands – of my old toenail cuttings. Some harking way back to the days when I was but a lad.

I can't remember if I ever told Paul McCartney – old mate of mine, since you ask – about my toenail cuttings collection. Must have, I suppose. But I can't remember it. Clean slipped the old memory.

When friends drop round for a chinwag, I'm always dead keen to show them the old toenail cuttings book.

"They may all look the same," I tell them. "But if you look close, they're all very different. And if you put your tongue over them, they all taste very different too."

They're amazed. Wish they'd done the same with their own toenails. Now it's too late, of course. Think of all those toenail clippings that have been binned. Millions and millions of them. Trillions, even. Wicked waste. That's what I say.

Don't talk to me about Rice Krispies. Can't stand the things. I'm a Weetabix man, myself. Always have been. Always will be. Love the way they go all soft and soggy when you pour your milk over them. Rice Krispies are for sissies.

And as for Ricicles, don't talk to me about Ricicles. Call them a breakfast cereal?! In my book they're not a breakfast cereal. Not remotely. More like something else, though just at this minute I can't think what.

I can never forget my first Weetabix. And the reason I can never forget it is that it's nicely filed away on a shelf in my special cupboard marked "Hunter's Weetabix Collection".

See, ever since I was six or seven – still in shorts, though I'd have to refer to my collection of shorts before telling you which exactly – I've made a point every brekkers of spitting out a smidgin of nice soggy Weetabix. Only a little bit, mind. A taster. Just for the collection.

Then I insert the little smidgin of Weeters in a thimble, label it according to date and any special memories I have removing it from my mouth. And then I file it away for the grandchildren.

Just think. I must have one of the greatest fully annotated collections of used Weetabix in the world. Valuable, too, some of it. One of my used Weetabix is clearly marked "Breakfast with Paul (McCartney). June 17th 1966." It's a fave of mine.

Paul was a mate at the time. Still is, since you ask.

Hunter's rule Numero Uno. Never throw away a sticky plaster. Or, if you want to come over all toffee-nosed about it: never discard an elastoplast.

Over the years, I've had any number of cuts and scratches. On both knees. On my left elbow. On my shins. All over the place. Blood everywhere. Specially on the old face. You can't have snazzy whiskers like mine and not be a martyr to the razor blade. 'Course you can't.

Not in a million years.

Whoopsy, another cut. Out comes the box of plasters, all different shapes and sizes. Depending on the cut. Don't put a small plaster over a big cut. Doesn't work. Before you know where you are, you'll find it's too small by a long chalk. And then where will you be?

So match the plaster to the cut or scratch. It's a science. Then a few days later yank it off. Ouch. Doesn't half hurt doing that.

Now keep it, clearly marked with time and date, for your homegrown Sticky Plaster collection. And if it's got a bit of pus on it, so much the better. Nice to brighten things up with a bit of colour.

I've got quite a few plasters from folk who are famous, since you ask. Celebrities, I suppose you'd call them these days.

What's this one? Let's look on the back. That's it. Paul McCartney. Old mate. Nice bloke. Done well for himself. Got a blister on his left ankle out walking, November, 1981. Took a sticky plaster from yours truly on condition he sent it back once he'd finished with it.

Now it's neatly filed away under F for Famous Folk. Between a sticky plaster once worn by Dame Muriel Spark, no less. And another worn by Sir Cliff Richard. Nothing but the best for old Hunter, that's what I'm thinking.

Turds. Big-jobs. Poos. Stools. Number Ones. Call 'em what you will, they make great collectibles.

Don't half pong though, given half a chance. Phew! Talk about a touch of the old hold-noses.

I've been collecting my old Number Ones for as long I can remember. Fish them out with a net. And straight into the freeze-drier. Oh joy. Preserves them beautifully, just like they were made yesterday.

And stops them smelling. Just a bit. I've had the old freeze-drier since 1969. Still works like a dream. Fab. Bought it with the profits from my best-selling Beatles biog. Those were the days. Macca still keeps in touch, bless him. He's had more than his fair share of Number Ones. And no, I'm not talking about hit singles.

Where do I keep them, I hear you ask. Up the loft. Each one clearly labelled with date and location of exit.

Got one in my hand now. Algarve, Summer, 1973. Must've been on holiday. Brought it back in a plastic container. How'd I get it through customs? Don't ask. Let's just say I was wearing a hat at the time.

I collect hamsters, alive and dead. And goldfish, ditto. And old labels off Baked Bean tins. Only Heinz, mind. Never Crosse and Blackwell, not on your nelly.

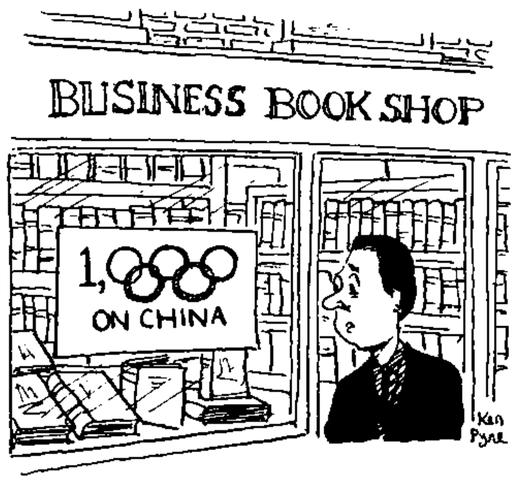
I collect carrier bags and shoelaces and tube tickets and paper serviettes and matchboxes and banana-skins and toothpaste-tubes and safety-pins. Take it from me. There's nothing not worth collecting. Now I'm collecting together a collection of all my collective pieces on collecting. I think they'll make a fab collection. Since you ask.

As told to
CRAIG BROWN

DAD, YOU'RE WEARING CLOTHES THAT ARE WAY TOO YOUNG FOR YOU AGAIN.
SO?
DON'T YOU THINK THERE'S SOMETHING A BIT SAD ABOUT A MAN OF YOUR AGE TRYING TO BE TWENTY-ONE AGAIN?
I MEAN, LOOK AT YOURSELF. IT'S EMBARRASSING. SORT IT OUT.
YOU'RE RIGHT, PIXIE..
TAKE DOWN ALL THE MIRRORS IN THE HOUSE!

Literary Review

Chinese whispers



CHASING a quick buck round the Olympic stadium in the smog may not seem like a good strategy for business, but publishers are desperate, and in the run-up to the Games they have been flooding the market with China-related books in an attempt to cash in.

History, fiction and travel books have all been affected, with cover designs sporting endless images of dragons, chopsticks, emperors, great walls and bamboo shoots. But it is in the business section of the bookshop where, perhaps appropriately, the hype and hysteria have been most noticeable.

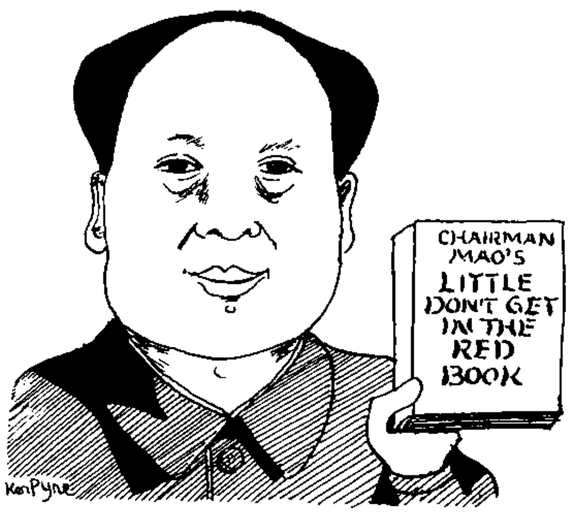
A typical offering is Robert Hsu's *China Fireworks: How to Make Dramatic Wealth from the Fastest-Growing Economy in the World* (Wiley, £14.99). This promises top tips on investment strategy to exploit the "China miracle" of runaway growth while warning optimistic punters to study the market and not behave like, er, a "bull in a China shop". Tip No 1? "Gather accurate information about China." Where from? Well, apart from his book of course, from which you will learn "the fundamentals you need in order to understand what's going on and how you can profit from it", there is also Hsu's own website.

Another interesting bit of advice is to sell to the Chinese, many of whom are now wealthy middle-class yuppies (a phenomenon for which Hsu has coined the term "Chuppies"), the goods and services they actually want to buy. This is quite a novel concept in business circles, I'm told.

By way of a companion volume, the same publisher has brought out a work by James Trippon called *Becoming Your Own China Stock Guru: The Ultimate Investor's Guide to Profiting from China's Economic Boom* (£18.99). The title more than speaks for itself: it yells like a cocaine-crazed floor trader. The content is only slightly more modest, with Trippon promising to reveal "how the average investor can profit from the largest economic miracle of the 21st century". Too bad about the credit crunch, boys (China investment funds have lost a third of their value).

China is not, of course, the only contender for economic superpower status: several recent books have sought to compare its chances with those of, say, India. Two of them, in choosing their titles, seem to have plundered the same iconic menagerie but in a different order, perhaps reflecting their respective views on the likely top, er, dog. Robyn Meredith, with *The Elephant and the Dragon: The Rise of India and China and What It Means for All of Us* (Norton, £9.99) seems to favour India, while David Smith, with *The Dragon and the Elephant: China, India and the New World Order* (Profile, £8.99) appears to give primacy to China.

Two other writers who seem to have had remarkably similar ideas about doing business in China are Peter Levenda and Sheila Melvin.



In *The Mao of Business* (Continuum, £12.99) Levenda makes the point that most Chinese mainlanders in positions of power and wealth will not have studied classics such as Sun Tzu's *The Art of War* (which is often presented as a book of business strategy) or Lao Tzu's *Tao Te Ching*, but instead will have spent their student years mouthing the *Thoughts of Chairman Mao*. Levenda recommends adopting the art of guerrilla warfare: take the villages first, live off the land, befriend the peasants and so forth. This translates into the somewhat unremarkable observations that you should start with small projects, obtain local knowledge and cultivate useful contacts at all levels of society.

Melvin's *Little Red Book of China Business* (Piatkus, £12.99) is based on a similar premise, viz that "the best prism through which to view Chinese history is: Mao Zedong". His ideas about chaos, contradiction and the unity of opposites, and the ways in which he confounded vastly superior enemies, supposedly provide business folk with a model of how to succeed in the Chinese market. Clutching a little red book to your chest and shouting "Long Live Chairman Mao" is probably not one of them, however.

If you thought a communist revolutionary like Mao was an odd choice of capitalist role model, wait till you read about the Buddha's views on business strategy, as explained by his holiness the Dalai Lama. In *The Leader's Way*, subtitled *Business, Buddhism and Happiness in an Interconnected World* (Brealey, £16.99), he appears not as the exiled figurehead of an occupied state or the spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhism, but rather as an indispensable fund of sound advice on corporate governance and marketing strategy.

"Profit is a fine aim," his holiness writes, "so long as it has been earned honestly." And in case you thought otherwise, "Buddha never praised or advocated poverty."

The book goes on to explain about "becoming wealthy in the right way", which basically involves balancing the needs of customers, employees and shareholders and not being excessively greedy or rapacious. There is nothing exclusively Buddhist about such aims, as any "good" Christian, Jewish, Muslim or Hindu CEO would doubtless adopt the same approach. But the Dalai Lama enjoys almost impregnable good PR, and this book, co-written with management consultant Laurens van den Muyzenberg, is a tour de force of bland inoffensiveness.

Whatever happens in or around the Games, publishers who have sought to bathe in the Olympic flame's brief candlepower must rue the fact that their own market is not the fastest-growing workshop of the world but the somewhat less recession-proof domain of the western English-reading public. No gold or silver, then, or even bronze, but a few coppers if they're lucky.

SNIPCOCK & TWEED
SALMAN'S SIGNING A RECORD NUMBERS OF HIS NEW NOVEL!
ISN'T IT INCREDIBLY BORING?
OF COURSE IT IS - AND SO'S SIGNING BOOKS

Books & Bookmen

■ MORE on the row between a host of children's authors, illustrators, parents, teachers and librarians and the Publishers Association.

It concerns the association's proposal that all books should feature "age guidance" displayed prominently on their covers (see *Eye* 1212) as a handy aid to gift buyers – and a stern no-entry sign to children whose tastes or reading abilities may lag behind those of their peers.

Philip Pullman's statement of opposition to the scheme at www.notoagebanding.org now has more than 3,000 signatories, including such names as JK Rowling, Anthony Horowitz, Nina Bawden, Dick King-Smith and Amanda Ross, one of the most influential figures in the book trade as creator of the *Richard & Judy* book club. Her opposition is particularly significant, as many authors claim to have previously been informed that Ross was a key driver behind the age-banding proposals.

A number of publishers – including Usborne, Bloomsbury and Walker Books – have pulled out of the scheme altogether and guaranteed that no ages will appear on their covers. Others, such as Scholastic and Random House, insist they will – in the latter case, this appears to include the works of Jacqueline Wilson, despite her stated opposition to the idea.

The Publishers Association this month pledged that there is "no question of age guidance being added to a book without full consultation with the author", but this falls very short of a veto – indeed, the association's stated view is that the idea that "authors should have the right to refuse to have age guidance on their books" is "a remaining point of difference which is to be considered further".

Others recall the "consultation" with their trade body, the Society of Authors' Children's Writers and Illustrators Group, on the topic, which was described as "more of a presentation than a consultation" and in any case only occurred in April, when the first age-banded books to appear on shelves were already well into production. And still more question how a consultation process will work when it comes to authors like Roald Dahl who are, er, dead.

When the Society of Authors ran a poll of their own members into the issue, 77 percent declared themselves against age-banding, with only 8 percent supporting the idea. The society has now added a debate on the issue to the schedule of their Children's Writers and Illustrators Group conference in Cambridge at the end of August – or rather, a "special discussion session", since, despite requests to every member of the Publishers Association, at the time of going to press not a single speaker has been found who is willing to argue in favour of the scheme.

■ THE closure of *Publishing News* came as little surprise to those who knew the magazine's true circulation, which had for some years languished at considerably fewer than the chairman Fred Newman's oft-claimed 10,000 copies.

This *legerdemain* was one of the reasons Newman has been unable to sell the publication as a going concern or its title and goodwill to VNU, publisher of the rival *Bookseller*. One senior *PN* executive who departed Newman's employ acrimoniously some years ago is known to have improved his settlement by producing an invoice revealing the true print run.

Meanwhile, environmentalists are concerned about some of the publishers leaflets and inserts that ended up as landfill. The magazine's entire editorial, advertising and production staff are heading the same way, facing redundancy after the final issue goes to press this week – although the glitzy British Book Awards, "the Oscars of the book trade", will continue.

■ BOOKWORM (*Eye 1212*) wrote earlier this year that it was high time another woman won the Samuel Johnson non-fiction award – and Kate Summerscale with her Victorian real life detective story *The Suspicions of Mr Whicher* duly did so, defeating all the male authors on the shortlist.

Publishing's grumpy old men, however, started voicing "suspicions" of their own – chairman of the judges Rosie Boycott is not just a feminist but a Bloomsbury author just like the winner. Hannah Rothschild, one of the judges, has the same agent as Summerscale. Alexandra Pringle, editor of the winning book, was a Virago old girl as was Boycott. Boycott was a deliberately populist chair because the BBC want a more accessible winner. Etc, etc, etc.

The less grumpy old men (and women) counter that the mystery is simply that so many good non-fiction books get published at all. Not just Summerscale but Alex Ross's innovative study of 20th century music, Tim Butcher's *Blood River* and books like David Kynaston's much admired *Austerity Britain* that didn't even make the shortlist.

'Bookworm'

Private Eye's Worstseller Chart - Speedy cuttings jobs

Position	Author	Title	Subtitle	Published	Sales to date
1	Lewis Hamilton	LEWIS HAMILTON	My Story	Harper, November 2007	203,425
2	Brian Belton	LEWIS HAMILTON	A Dream Comes True	Pennant, September 2007	5,019
3	Frank Worrall	LEWIS HAMILTON	The Biography	John Blake, October 2007	4,775
4	Mark Hughes	LEWIS HAMILTON	The Full Story	Icon Books, November 2007	3,989
5	Bruce Jones	LEWIS HAMILTON	The People's Champion	Carlton, November 2007	1,191
6	Ian Stafford	LEWIS HAMILTON	New Kid On The Grid	Mainstream, November 2007	947

Class bore

'We Danced All Night': A Social History of Britain Between the Wars

Martin Pugh

(Bodley Head, £20)

THE tremendous social infighting that has characterised British society over the past century or so had a single, emphatic victor: the middle classes.

A few spangled redoubts of ancient aristocratic privilege might still get an occasional outing in the up-market gossip pages; organised labour might now and again poke its head above the parapet to general indifference; but by and large bourgeois triumphalism is the order of the day. The *Daily Telegraph* even has a new name for its core readership – the "coping classes", without whose sterling efforts on behalf of What Really Matters the national fabric would presumably crumble away to dust.

Given the regularity with which this line gets peddled by the newspapers, it's no surprise to find it seeping through into social history. To paraphrase King George V when introduced to his first Labour prime minister, we are all revisionists now. David Kynaston's *Austerity Britain 1945-51*, published last year, saw the Attlee government's six years in office not as a roseate dawn symbolised by the introduction of the welfare state, but as a sturdy suburban fight-back against the interfering bureaucrats. *'We Danced All Night'* – the title, incidentally, comes from Barbara Cartland's autobiography – tries the same trick on the period 1918-1939.

What images flock into the average consciousness on mention of the words "between the wars"? Armies of ragged men marching on parliament? Malnourished children playing in the shadow of the slag heaps? Debt, deprivation and the dole queue winding on through the windy streets? Not much of that kind of thing here, alas, for this is *bourgeois* history, the kind of book in which Lord Lymington, an obscure peer who agitated for a return to feudalism, rates more index references than Jarrow, and Gracie Fields makes half-a-dozen appearances to the Labour leader George Lansbury's one.

Practically everywhere through its 400-plus statistic-heavy pages the middle classes can be seen going happily about their business – taking out mortgages, playing golf, enjoying quiet fortnights by the sea. The Means Test, on the other hand, which cast a blight over millions of working-class homes gets a single paragraph.

It's not, one hastens to add, that Pugh discounts any of the evidence suggesting that, on the contrary, much of the UK in the 1920s and 30s was a kind of sink of urban dereliction. To be sure, the figures are reliably doled out: near 40 percent unemployment rates in the north-east, a huge diaspora in which hundreds of thousands of unemployed workers headed east and south from Wales and the industrialised north in search of jobs. What he conspicuously fails to do, though, is to consider some of the social consequences of these descents both on the communities left behind and those eventually colonised.

All this is compounded by the tiny range of corroborative detail. Sticking either to a handful of recently published memoirs by the likes of Paul Johnson and Brian Walden, or fail-safe social historians' standbys such as Laurie Lee's *Cider with Rosie*, he is much less keen on, among other things, the popular fiction of the day. Oddly enough the inter-war bestsellers by J.B. Priestley, A.J. Cronin and Warwick Deeping are crammed not with bourgeois triumphalists but harassed drones drudging in fear of the sack.

How has this bold and innovative work been greeted by messieurs et mesdames the critics? Curiously enough, the stance adopted by Pugh's reviewers was almost entirely in line with the ideological position of the newspapers for which they wrote. Which is to say that the *Express* and the two *Telegraphs* just *loved* it, while the whingeing lefties at the *Guardian* and the *Independent* had their doubts. This isn't for a moment to suggest that inter-war British social life should be seen as a series of variations on *The Road to Wigan Pier*. But it would be a dreadful shame if our collective past kept on being falsified to suit the prejudices of the fat little men in the Surrey mock-Tudors.

Herman Melville

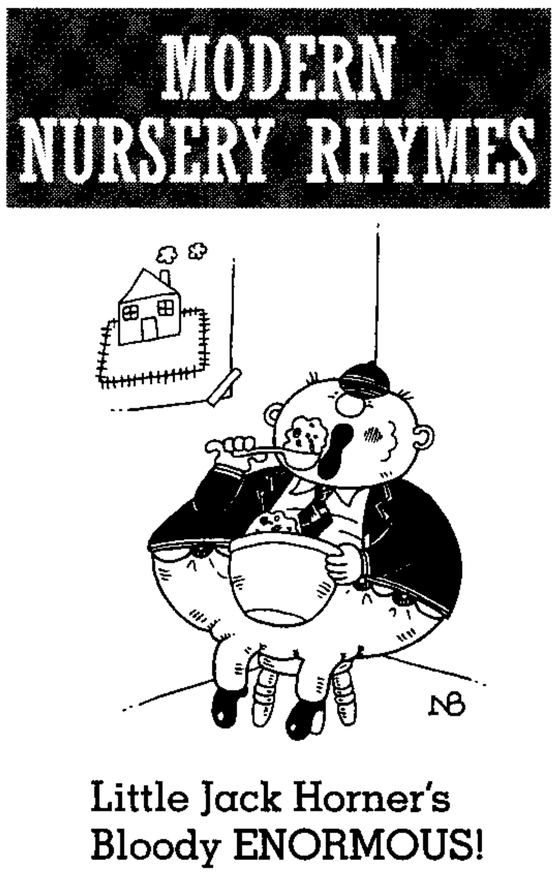
LIBRARY NEWS

■ BOOKS don't get burned in this country any more... they just get chucked in a skip.

As Wakefield plans a new city centre library and rejigs its local branches, some un-catalogued, rare collections are in danger of being lost for ever. When one book lover noticed a sale at Balne Library in Wakefield, he filled his bags with leather-bound titles and an 1880 copy of *Boy's Own*, but he was horrified when staff told him any left-over books would be sent to the skip.

Wakefield council's service manager claimed the books were not of a quality to interest dealers or the public, yet a retired librarian has been trying to index the library's collection. He has unearthed a major collection of bibliographies, a rare collection of Victorian and Edwardian children's annuals and a rare copy of Diderot's *Encyclopédie* from 1770.

The local Green Party is now calling for a halt to the sale of special collections and insists on an audit of Wakefield's rich literary heritage.



Little Jack Horner's Bloody ENORMOUS!

Pseuds Corner

You can't write about the lyrics of Patti Smith in ordinary language. To do so is to apply the wrong tool. To do so is to fail to understand her revolution *[continues]*

RICK MOODY, foreword to a *Guardian* 'Great lyricists' booklet

Harrison Birtwhistle's The Minotaur (BBC2) was far too long and the ungainly libretto ranged from syntactic insouciance to prosaic farce, taking the prosaic instead of the poetic route. The latter would add both to the emotional range and dramatic pace of the action, thereby contributing to what remains a general failure of symbiosis between music and text.

DAVID LLOYD-HOWELLS, 'Your say', *Sunday Times* Culture Section

Best described as an independently spirited boutique; a stylishly eccentric, yet subtly located playground for those requiring some social rehabilitation from the mainstream... It's a vinyl thing, a love thing, it's perpetual progression, urbanite living in the country, dressing up to get down and dressing down to get up...

***West Briton* hails the opening of the 'Watch Your Grammar' night-spot, Truro**

Creed's Corner

I like running...Running is the opposite of being still. If you think about death as being completely still and movement as a sign of life, then the fastest movement possible is the biggest sign of life. So then running fast is like the exact opposite of death – it's an example of aliveness.

MARTIN CREED, creator of 'Work No. 850', now showing at the Tate, in which athletes will run up and down the Duveen Galleries at 30 second intervals, quoted in all newspapers

'...compelling, simple and lyrical. In lifting an everyday activity out of its usual context and dropping it into the central galleries of the Tate, it upsets any preconceived ideas of how to move appropriately through an art space.'

STEPHEN DEUCHAR, director of Tate Britain, on the above, *Financial Times*

The great thing about Creed's Work No. 850 is that it is gloriously pointless, a repeated explosion of vitality, a sort of extension of Paul Klee's definition of drawing as 'taking a line for a walk.' Nor will the runners always cut a straight line through the gallery. Creed's work will only really come alive when the runners encounter Tate Britain's everyday visitors, dodging tourists, sidestepping school parties and hurtling past the elderly...Creed's runners leave a vortex in their wake, in our heads and in the space. This is an electrifying, simple and enormously satisfying gesture.

ADRIAN SEARLE, *Guardian*

CONTRIBUTORS: Paul Doyle, Sebastian Bosley, Ivor Williams, John Evison, Phil Carter, Paul Mathieu, Timothy Knapman.

£10 paid for all entries

IN THE BACK

THIRD WORLD FOOD AID

Hungry for profit

WHY has Britain's publicly-owned international development fund CDC, formerly the Commonwealth Development Corporation, been allowed to slash its investment in third world food production from £300m in 1999 to just £80m last year, with only £25m of that in Africa (itself down £10m on the previous year)?

Back in 1997 CDC was proposed as Labour's very first sell-off. The idea was that it should borrow more cash on the markets to increase its investments. But if it remained in the public realm, such borrowing would of course have gone on to Gordon's books, a consequence to be avoided at all costs.

Hence the proposed sell-off, which would, in the Treasury's words eight years ago, "depend on CDC plc establishing a financial track record and on prevailing market conditions". To achieve this CDC was given a new chief executive in ex-Goldman Sachs banker Allan Gillespie and a remit to vastly increase its returns. Agriculture, typically yielding less than half the 20 percent-plus return required, had to go.

In the event the stock market downturn of the early 2000s scuppered the sale plan but ushered in the bizarre scheme under which, in 2004, the fund management function of CDC was flogged to its own bosses for a pittance in the furtive private equity transaction that created Actis (*Eyes passim*). Since then the Actis partners' private-equity level incentives have only accelerated the retreat from food production.

The growing world food crisis hasn't escaped environment secretary Hilary Benn. As he said: "Recent events in world food markets have shown that continued access to affordable food is not something that can be taken for granted... The long term challenges in this area are significant but can be overcome". But not by pulling money out of third world food production in the way CDC's funds have since the Actis sell-off was pushed through by the international development secretary at the time... one Hilary Benn.

● WHILE only 6.7 percent of CDC's investments are now in agriculture, the department for international development's 2008 report manages to highlight one of them as the only case study of CDC's work.

So what does the remaining 93.3 percent of the development money, that the government would rather not talk about, go into? Most is in businesses that could attract private sector investment anyway; 21 percent in financial institutions (mostly banks), 18 percent in infra-structure, 16 percent in mining and oil and 14 percent in manufacturing.

Then there are "other" investments which, at 11 percent, far outstrip agriculture. These include a healthy line in shopping centres and, er, beauty products, one of the largest of which is the Paras company of India. As one product boasts: "If elite is your middle name, then the exclusive Set Wet Zatak Gold Club is the deodorant for you. Be a member of the club and make women swoon. Very, very premium. Very, very sexy. Spray it on and go clubbing like never before!"

As the last *Eye* pointed out, this and other "investments" of equal developmental value contribute to official measures of Britain's "overseas development assistance". Very, very suspect.

● WHEN Radio 4's ***File on 4*** reported the story last week, CDC, Actis and the department for international development all refused to be interviewed. CDC's £1m-a-year chief executive Richard Laing cancelled an interview after "discussions" with DfID, sponsor of media awards and funder of projects in other countries "to support the media to bring about better governance". A DfID spokesman dismissed the idea that the government told Laing to keep quiet as "absolute bollocks".

FREEDOM OF SPEECH

Eady and the bottom line

SITTING in the high court in London, Mr Justice Eady looked every inch the impartial judge as he weighed counsels' arguments on whether the *News of the World* had the right to print pictures of Max Mosley's battered backside. In the wider world, however, it is Eady's reputation that is on trial, and the prospect of His Lordship receiving a sound thrashing grows by the day.

After contemplating libel judgments made by Eady in London, over in the US independent Democrat Senator Joe Lieberman and Republican Senator Arlen Specter have introduced the Free Speech Protection Act to Congress to try to make English libel judgments unenforceable in the land of the free. To blacklist the English courts would be an unprecedented snub to London's judges, but Eady's treatment of Rachel Ehrenfeld has provoked the Americans beyond endurance (see *Eyes passim*).

As we have reported, her book *Funding Evil* repeated allegations that the Saudi banker Khalid Bin Mahfouz helped fund Osama bin Laden. Mahfouz's lawyers did not deny the link but said the money was to help the resistance to the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan and was never intended for operations against the West.

As Ehrenfeld was an American whose book had never been published in Britain, naïve observers assumed the dispute was no business of the English courts. They underestimated Eady. Even though bin Mahfouz had paid $225m to settle charges of fraud arising from the collapse of BCCI, Eady decided the sheikh still had a reputation worth protecting. He fined Ehrenfeld $250,000 and ordered her to destroy all copies of the book.

As Lieberman and Specter put it, English libel suits "intimidate and even silence writers and publishers". They now propose that American authors and publishers should be allowed to countersue if the English courts ban a book. In future, the opponents of free speech may have to answer for their actions in a country where free speech is constitutionally protected.

Despite the fury he has generated in the US, *Eye* readers will know there was nothing exceptional about Eady's order to censor Ehrenfeld. Even though bin Mahfouz is not a British citizen, the English courts have allowed him to file or threaten to file libel suits on 30 separate occasions, and ban not only *Funding Evil*, but the Cambridge University Press's *Alms for Jihad* and Craig Unger's *House of Bush, House of Saud*.

Policy Exchange, David Cameron's favourite think tank, has noticed the growing outrage and invited Ehrenfeld's supporters to a recent seminar on libel tourism. There is tentative talk in Conservative circles of giving special protection to journalists engaged in the difficult and dangerous task of investigating terrorism.

Whether a Tory government will go further and embrace American freedom is open to doubt. Although charities, human rights activists and serious authors and journalists are begging for change, the road block to reform was on display in Eady's court in early July. Any politician tempted to extend freedom of the press need only take one look at the filth merchants on the *Screws* to find good reason to think again.

'Ratbiter'

DEFENCE

Metrix reloaded

COLD FEET at the Ministry of Defence over plans to privatise military training under a £11bn PFI deal with the Metrix consortium of usual suspects Qinetiq, EDS, Raytheon and others (*Eyes passim*).

A parliamentary statement on the tortuous negotiations with Metrix was due among the usual unpopular announcements just before the parliamentary recess, but armed forces minister Bob Ainsworth (pictured) thought better of it. "With negotiations now reaching a critical point," he told staff, "it has been decided that a written [parliamentary] statement would not be appropriate at this time."

Insiders say that, following the *Eye's* revelations of concerns in the forces and Whitehall that the plan could go pear-shaped, never mind prove unaffordable (*Eyes* 1213 and 1214), Ainsworth decided that any more publicity on the stuttering deal would be counter-productive.

A parliamentary answer given to Tory MP Mark Pritchard last week, prompted by the *Eye's* disclosures, also suggests the deal is on the ropes. "Cost growth and the implications of the credit crunch on borrowing have been a significant factor," admitted Ainsworth. "The Department has been working jointly with Metrix to drive the price down to seek to eliminate the affordability gap without materially affecting the scope of the project". The figures always were marginal but with Metrix's borrowing costs likely to rise and the deal dependent on selling land in a depressed property market, the hare-brained privatisation plan could soon either be pulled or drastically reined-in.

● ONE of the Metrix consortium members, private education company Nord Anglia, has just been snaffled up by Baring Private Equity Asia of Hong Kong. The private equity firm was itself bought by its management four years ago from Dutch bank ING, which acquired the Baring name post-Leeson.

Baring, hitherto uninterested in either Britain or the military, is after Nord Anglia's burgeoning and highly lucrative "international schools" business in China. What the anonymous far eastern fund makes of its commitment to training the British military remains to be seen.

Meanwhile another company is using the deal to further its global military ambitions. On the back of its success as part of the Metrix consortium, US firm Raytheon last week announced it is setting up a global training division and expects "international growth" to see profits from the business grow by 6.5 percent annually. Should cheer the troops up no end.

● EVEN the man who was in charge of army personnel matters as the privatisation plan was taking shape, former Adjutant General Sir Alistair Irwin, had his doubts, it seems.

One insider reports a mess dinner in 2003 when the then AG described the plan as "Alice in Wonderland", though Sir Alistair told the *Eye* he couldn't recall making the comment.

All warnings were ignored as the PFI scheme was pushed forward so that much-needed commitments to pay for investment in the training estate could be kept off the government's books. Yet another triumph for Gordon's "Alice in Wonderland" PFI initiative.

No way to treat a veteran

THE Ministry of Defence is fighting a war on two fronts in defence of its pensions policy.

The three Gurkha veterans who lost their high court battle against a deal that left them with one sixth of the pension given to soldiers still serving or retiring from duty after 1997 are considering an appeal. They argued that they had been discriminated against because of their age, but Mr Justice Ouseley concluded that the MoD "had acted reasonably". Their lawyers, on the other hand, are confident their appeal will be successful.

But at least they got something. Other former soldiers say they're also facing age discrimination. Anyone joining up after 1949 could expect a pension after 22 years of service. But in 1975, the rules changed to help those who had put in less time. If you retired after April 1975, you could expect a pro-rata pension with less than the full 22 years. But those retiring before April 1975, with even marginally less time served, were told they would get nothing.

A former soldier with 20 years of service in Germany and Bahrain received nothing, even though he had stoppages taken out of his pay. Another 90-year-old veteran served in the Royal Navy for 21 years and 7 months before being found "surplus to requirements" early in 1975. Through no fault of his own he was retired five months short of his 22 years and again received the remarkably generous sum of, er, nothing at all.

'Square Basher'

NUMBER CRUNCHING

3 Months in prison MP's assistant Leo O'Connor served for handling secret memo about war in Iraq last year

3 Number of USB memory sticks containing information classified as 'secret' which MoD has 'mislaid' this year

FOLLOW-UP... FOLLOW-UP... FOLLOW-UP...

■ KEVIN LANE: The man who for 14 years has protested his innocence over a gangland murder won a small victory in the high court last week when the Prison Service agreed to review its decision to continue holding Mr Lane as a category A high-risk prisoner.

Lane's application was seen as test of prison practice, for those claiming to be victim of a miscarriage of justice can be condemned to longer jail sentences and more stringent security than those who admit a crime.

Lane was convicted of shooting Robert Magill in Chorleywood, Hertfordshire, in October 1994, in a case that has long been controversial (see *Eye* 1182). It was sent back to the Criminal Cases Review Commission for a second time after the key police officer, Christopher Spackman, was himself jailed for a "disgusting catalogue of crime and lies". Now Lane's lawyers are about to submit a third dossier which is understood to raise serious further concerns about Spackman's role in the murder case.

As a category A inmate, Lane has been subject to closer scrutiny and less freedoms than other prisoners. But to have his status reduced, he would have to attend courses dealing with his "offending" behaviour and acknowledge his "crime". Even though Lane's prison records show he is co-operative with no record of trouble that would present the prison service with a risk should his status be reduced, he fails because he cannot complete the necessary courses.

Simon Creighton, his solicitor, said: "There is a credibility gap in the system as although the Prison Service state that protesting innocence is not a barrier to progress, the reality is that Kevin is being told he must admit his guilt in order to be downgraded."

THE BOURN PROFLIGACY

Tax & bend

IN HIS last public appearance before "retiring" earlier this year following the *Eye's* revelations of lavish perks courtesy of the taxpayer, former head of the National Audit Office Sir John Bourn insisted: "What was done in the past was done properly."

Er, not according to the taxman, it wasn't.

The NAO's recent annual report explains how HM Revenue and Customs has just hit the NAO with a £100,000 bill for back-taxes after the auditor failed to disclose Sir John's use of a chauffeur-driven car to get to and from the office every day (not to mention those hundreds of lunches and dinners) that the *Eye* first revealed a year ago, as well as underestimating the benefit of taking his wife on various jaunts. But as ever, Bourn won't have to dip into his own pocket: the NAO has picked up his tax bill!

Then there's a £6,000 penalty, levied only in cases of "negligence". Not a great advert for a public spending watchdog or the man who sat on the negligent audit committee, Bourn's successor Tim Burr.

The taxman took a generous view of another Bourn perk: the £66,000 in staff time and expenses helping him with his book *Public Sector Auditing: Is It Value for Money*? In return for handing any post-tax royalties back to the NAO, he won't be taxed on that benefit even though the taxpayer is unlikely to see much return on his £66k.

REVENUE & CUSTOMS

See no evil

MORE on the unusual appointment of private equity boss Mike Clasper as chairman of HM Revenue and Customs (see last *Eye*).

When the "operational managing director" of Terra Firma's name came up, investigators in HMRC's Special Civil Investigations quickly submitted a report to their board. They explained that they were engaged in a deep investigation into the firm's many offshore trusts and the correspondingly small UK tax bill footed by the outfit controlled by Guy Hands through a Cayman Islands company.

At this point, the "blind eye" that senior HMRC figures are so keen to turn to tax avoidance by the wealthy was again in evidence. Don't worry about it, came the reply from bosses, even though a few weeks before HMRC had told *Accountancy Age* that "somebody associated with aggressive avoidance needn't waste their time". Immediately Clasper was unveiled at HMRC the department issued a Q&A briefing for staff. "Will we ensure that the new chair and chief executive have never been involved in tax planning/avoidance/evasion?" was one question. "The successful candidates will be of the highest integrity. There is no question anybody appointed to the posts could bring the department or their own personal integrity into question", came the reply.

● MEANWHILE the costs of the fiasco surrounding the loss of discs containing the personal details of 25 million people are starting to emerge.

First there were the "apology" letters from acting chairman Dave Hartnett to members of the public costing £2.5m; then £500,000 for a police investigation (which found nothing criminal had happened).

Now comes the bill from Pricewaterhouse-Coopers, whose chairman Kieron Poynter generously agreed to conduct a review for free while, entirely coincidentally, he was supported by a team from, er, PwC.

The firm has been paid £600,000 for investigating the lost discs episode and £3m for a "wider review", which culminated in Poynter's 90-page report. Even if the consultants were paid an average £1,000 a day, this would have meant 30 of them working full time on the six-month project.

The Independent Police Complaints Commission also investigated events leading up to the scandal, providing an equally detailed account for a more modest £70,000. Just as well PwC charged its "discounted rates for public sector work".

In the Back continues overleaf ➤

NHS HEALTH CHECK

MEDICINE BALLS

Not warts and all

WHY has "new" Labour chosen not to protect girls from genital warts as well as cervical cancer?

M.D. wrote in March last year about the UK's delay in instigating a vaccination programme with Gardasil, which gives excellent protection against both diseases and has been widely used for over a year in the US, Canada, Australia and many European countries (see *Eye* 1181). Not only has the UK delayed introduction – presumably for cost reasons – but it has plumped for a cheaper vaccine, Cervarix, which only protects against cervical cancer.

Those unsure how unpleasant warts can be should take a peak at www.chestersexualhealth.co.uk/genitalwarts.htm. But be warned – this really isn't for the squeamish. M.D. has worked in a sexual clinic and seen the devastation that warts cause to people's sex lives (often non-existent) and emotional wellbeing (sometimes profoundly depressed). They're extremely common with upwards of 85,000 cases a year in England and Wales, costing £25m annually to treat. There would have been a significant reduction in wart workload and anguish within a few years had Gardasil been chosen, and in time the savings would easily compensate for the disparity in price between the two vaccines.

"New" Labour's decision makes no economic, clinical or humane sense. On 16 January, a letter from health secretary Alan Johnson to Colm O'Mahony, a sexual health consultant, suggests that Labour was at that stage opting for Gardasil: "It is expected the vaccination of girls will reduce the transmission of infection to boys, by herd immunity, and reduce the number of genital warts cases in boys as well as girls." So why the change of mind? "New" Labour spouts all this guff about respecting and understanding patients and then makes an absurdly unempathic decision.

Johnson's prevarication over top-up payments centres on his dislike of two-tier health systems, but every sexual health consultant and GP I've spoken to is advising parents who can afford it to pay for Gardasil (£250 for three injections). Why would you not protect your daughter against warts if you could? Some doctors have had their sons vaccinated too. Warts can kill your sex life, treatment can be embarrassing and uncomfortable and in a third of people they keep coming back.

Perhaps the market reforms of the NHS have left it so bankrupt that there simply isn't enough spare cash to fund the more expensive vaccine. But given that foundation hospitals have made record savings and are sitting on more than £1bn of taxpayers' money, this doesn't stack up. Labour, as the "champions of choice" – are denying parents the right to choose whether to protect their daughters against what can be a psychologically devastating, chronic infection. At the very least, those parents whose daughters are due to join the cervical cancer vaccination programme and want them to have the extra protection should be allowed to pay the difference between the two vaccines, rather than pay the whole cost of Gardasil. This is one top-up that's worth it.

M.D.

United we scammed

HEALTH ministers' determination to hand more and more NHS services to the controversial American healthcare care giant UnitedHealth grows ever more curious.

While the UK wing has always been at pains to stress its independence from its parent company, the UnitedHealth Group, the UK board has been quietly filling up with former directors from the US. Most ominously, three of them have come from Ingenix, the UnitedHealth subsidiary at the centre of allegations of a massive health insurance fraud on taxpayers, patients and doctors in America.

In February New York attorney general Andrew Cuomo said he intended to sue the UnitedHealth Group and four of its subsidiaries, including Ingenix. Until recently Ingenix was a little-known company running a database used by many health insurers to determine the rates at which they reimburse patients for treatments and services. He claimed the rates were deliberately manipulated so that patients or the taxpayer had to assume more of the costs and the insurance companies less. The American Medical Association has already filed a similar legal claim.

In May Lee Valenta and David Ostler, formerly chief executive and vice-president of Ingenix, took up new posts as directors at United over here, joining former colleague Brigid Spicola.

Even before the identities of the new arrivals on the UK board were known, former UK health secretary Frank Dobson summed up everyone's concerns when he raised in parliament United-Health's creeping influence in his north London constituency. He told the Commons earlier this month that since United had taken over three GP practices in Camden (*Eyes passim*), appointment times had been reduced and a baby clinic had been closed and only re-opened after a public outcry. He was concerned that UnitedHealth would win the contract to run the proposed polyclinic at University College Hospital (replacing many more GP practices), as well as the GP-out-of-hours contract.

"If so, that will be despite the fact that its owners have been indicted for fraud and every form of swindling of taxpayers, patients and doctors in the United States," Dobson said.

Given public concern at handing vast chunks of the NHS and taxpayers' money to private companies, why would United UK want to invite on to its board people whose activities at the helm of Ingenix are under investigation? A spokeswoman said: "The allegations of the New York attorney general have nothing to do with our day-to-day operations in the UK and in fact only relate to the US insurance market."

Sheer Foley

NOW that Sheila Foley has stepped down as head of NHS mental health provision in Manchester, in the light of a damning independent report, patients, staff and politicians are calling for the reinstatement of a community nurse whom Foley controversially sacked.

Eye readers may recall that Karen Reissmann (pictured) was suspended last year, after 25 years' service, on the very day she gained promotion to the role of senior psychiatric nurse. It was nothing to do with the job she loved and did well; it was because her union activities – criticising cost-cutting and privatisation – had upset bosses at Manchester's Mental Health and Social Care Trust.

Reissman's treatment prompted strikes and demonstrations. These added to the troubles beseiging the trust, which ranks third from bottom in the country for community care provision.

While not reaching any conclusion directly relating to the Reissmann fiasco, the report criticised trust management for "less than effective engagement with staff at all levels", "lack of effective communication" and "less then effective governance mechanisms within and across organisations".

Foley was said by the trust to have resigned for personal reasons. But her departure prompted Lib Dem leader Nick Clegg, among others, to call for Reissmann's immediate reinstatement. "The behaviour of the NHS Trust in this case has been nothing short of appalling," said Clegg. "The support this case has attracted locally shows the depth of feeling amongst the people of Manchester about what is happening to their NHS."

But so far the trust is not moving. A spokeswoman said there were no plans to reinstate Ms Reissmann ahead of her industrial tribunal in the autumn.

Let them eat cake

THERE was little to celebrate about the 60th-anniversary weekend of the NHS in Leicester Royal Infirmary, according to the experience of one *Eye* reader.

During a three-night stay for thyroid surgery, Vivienne Matravers witnessed:

- One old lady being left in her day clothes for an entire weekend. She did not appear to have been washed, her hair brushed or her teeth cleaned.
- A "horrid and very audible" argument between two staff about assisting another elderly patient, aged 83, to use a commode. The same patient was reduced to tears while she waited for help, and on two occasions Mrs Matravers herself was forced to come to her aid.
- An elderly male patient who may have had mental health problems wandering around the ward and on one occasion pulling out a patient's "drain" and assaulting a nurse. Despite a call to security, he was not removed until the next day.
- Call bells and phones going unanswered. Mrs Matravers herself said she was made to feel a nuisance when she asked for painkillers, only to be given large pills which were impossible to swallow following throat surgery.

So concerned was Mrs Matravers about the lack of basic care on her ward that she has forwarded her complaint to the chief executive of the hospital, her GP, her consultant and her MP.

The hospital was clean, the food healthy, her surgery faultless. But once she was taken to ward 8, "I was shocked at the lack of staff, the impossible amount being asked of the nursing staff and the stress they were under."

While chaos reigned on the ward, the overworked and stressed nurses added insult to injury by bringing patients individually wrapped NHS 60th anniversary birthday cake! With nothing much to celebrate, Mrs Matravers could not stomach it. "I left hospital extremely saddened at what I had seen and at the real state of the NHS," she said.

Carole Ribbins, the hospital's head nurse, said she was sorry some of Mrs Matravers' experience was below standard. "Some of the things she describes might have been as a result of being down one or two nurses that weekend, but that does not explain some of Mrs Matravers' other points which are about simple courtesy and respect. I'll be looking into this and calling Mrs Matravers to apologise and find out more."

Stake and kidney

FOR THE past few months, whenever a local paper runs a story mentioning kidney patients, whether it concerns hospital services or organ transplants, up pops a letter from Samantha Addie.

Addie's letters, highlighting the work of the Dialysis Options campaign, have appeared on letters pages from Middlesborough to Devon. "With current dialysis capacity issues and a focus on patient choice, shouldn't more patients be able to choose a home-based treatment?" she writes, again and again.

Nothing wrong with campaigning for better health services, of course – and many patients would indeed benefit from home dialysis (though others find it stressful for themselves and their carers and prefer to be treated in hospital). But Addie and Dialysis Options are not being entirely transparent since the campaign is in fact a marketing drive – sorry, a "communications programme" – funded by Baxter Healthcare, maker of… home dialysis equipment!

You can contact the In the Back team on 020 7437 4017 or email: strobes@private-eye.co.uk

In the City

IS THE Serious Farce Office, like the British government, looking for the exit in Iraq? Even before the surprise and (for the SFO) potentially terminal setback to the NHS generic drugs price-fixing prosecution, the impression was that new director Richard Alderman was far from enthusiastic about the SFO's other flagship case, into payments by British companies who participated in the corrupt oil-for-food programme with Saddam Hussein's regime.

Grey Man's script, aka the highly critical De Grazia review of the SFO (see *Eyes passim*), was withering in its comparison of a lumbering investigation yet to bring a charge with the convictions and fines already achieved by prosecutors in New York.

Fears that the oil-for-food case might be under threat have gathered support with word that the Iraq investigation, begun 18 months ago with a budget of £22m and a three-year deadline, is under review. A decision is expected in several weeks. Also under review are those arms of the BAE Systems investigation – Tanzania, Romania, the Czech Republic and South Africa – which survived the abject Saudi surrender.

Reassurance about the outcome of these reviews was not increased by the message sent out by Grey Man in several interviews last week timed to coincide with the SFO's latest annual report.

"Sprawling fraud cases that have little chance of success would be scrapped," declared the *Financial Times*; "SFO boss plans to cut back on prosecutions and investigations," was the *Guardian* headline. A case like oil-for-food, with the investigation likely to run to 2010 with any trials unlikely before 2012 at the earliest and with a running cost of £7m a year, would be right on that money.

However, just walking away may not be an option. The Americans, for one, would be more than a little upset as it was only US pressure which finally forced the SFO to begin the case more than a year after a United Nations report exposed the payments.

With the SFO already in the dock over the capitulation to Saudi pressure over BAE Systems, there would be further criticism from Transparency International and the anti-bribery committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) over Britain's failure to prosecute successfully a single case of overseas corruption. This despite the tough words of successive attorney-generals and SFO directors. "I am committed to doing all I can about this evil," Alderman declares in the SFO report.

The US has brought just over 100 cases since the OECD anti-bribery convention came into force in 1997. Last year, oil groups El Paso and Chevron settled oil-for-food cases, paying $7.7m and $30m respectively in fines and restitution to avoid prosecution. A similar deferred prosecution deal was reached with engineers Textron, who paid $1.15m. Vitol, the Swiss-based oil traders (and former employer of shadow enterprise spokesman Alan Duncan – see HP Sauce, page 6), pleaded guilty to larceny and paid $17.5m in restitution.

Texas oilmen David Chalmers and Oscar Wyatt have also pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit wire fraud. Wyatt, though 83, went to jail for a year and forfeited $11m after changing his plea mid-trial. Chalmers pleaded guilty and was jailed for two years earlier this year. His two companies paid $9m. British oil trader John Irving, who worked for Chalmers' Bayoil, is still fighting extradition.

Bulgarian oil trader Ludmil Dionissiev received a probation sentence for a guilty plea. South Korean lobbyist Tongsun Park was jailed for three years.

Compared to that list, the SFO has been all hat and no cattle. The 2005 Volcker report for the UN – which was the starting point for US prosecutors – identified several British companies which it claimed had paid kickbacks to obtain business under the oil-for-food programme. These included engineers Weir Group (which has admitted to discovering "irregular payments"), pharma-giants GlaxoSmithKline, AstraZeneca and Eli Lilly and builders Mabey and Johnson. All the companies deny any wrongdoing, often admitting the payments but either denying knowledge of them (blaming agents) or claiming the payments were known and approved by the UK authorities. There were also several small London-based oil trading operations implicated in kickbacks on behalf of bosses in Switzerland and Holland.

Building a winnable corruption case in a British court against executives and companies is no easy task, despite the Volcker evidence – which is why investigators at the SFO have been slowly grinding along an immense paper trail, similar in some ways to that presented by the NHS case but with the added complication of payments being made abroad, often through secrecy havens such as Switzerland.

A Rose by any other name

The question for any review will be how to speed up and/or short-cut this process in order to prevent another NHS-style embarrassment many years and many millions down the road. One answer could be to focus on one or two "easier" targets and let the others walk "in the public interest" of saving millions on an uncertain prosecution.

Top of any such list would probably be Weir and the three drug companies. However, why should they or Mabey & Johnson plead guilty? What can the SFO offer? As yet there is no equivalent procedure to the US deferred prosecution agreement whereby a company can admit to breaking the law but can write a large cheque, rather than having to plead guilty to a crime. Alderman would like such a weapon, probably with Iraq in mind.

At present, the only option seems to be that taken by Severn Trent, whereby the company pleaded guilty to providing false leakage data to Ofwat and was fined £2m by the SFO earlier this month after the regulator had hit the company with a £36m fine for misreporting customer service data. In that case, no Severn Trent executive was charged and the new management blamed everything on the previous management. The SFO stated that it had not prosecuted any executive because the length of time and cost of such a prosecution was not in the public interest.

But Severn Trent still had to plead guilty. Would any of the Iraq corporate suspects be prepared to cut a similar deal? The NHS case suggests that under the present rules there is no advantage for a company to plead guilty, especially if there may also be suits in the dock, until they see the trial starting. Unlike in the US, there is little pressure in terms of huge fines and heavy jail times to get the suits' attention before that time.

But can the SFO afford to walk away after spending up to £10m and with Alderman claiming that overseas corruption remains a high priority – despite dropping a case against a London-based Serb businessman over Balkan contracts? The only excuse would be the cost saving and that favourite legal argument: that there was no realistic prospect of conviction.

If oil-for-food joins BAE Systems (the law lords could direct the SFO to review its decision but Alderman knows what the government wants him to do – or rather not do) and possibly NHS price-fixing (also now subject to appeal by the SFO) in the "no further action" column, the arguments for the taxpayer spending £40m a year on the SFO merely to focus on public education on fraud prevention and prosecuting consumer frauds – which seems to be the Grey Man plan – as distinct from targeting major, complex frauds may well seem, well, a serious fraud.

DEFENDANTS in the NHS price-fixing case were understandably happy at the decision of the trial judge, Mr Justice Pitchford, apparently to disagree with the law lords and reject their seeming suggestion that the SFO's conspiracy-to-defraud indictment could be amended. However, claims that Operation Holbein has cost the taxpayer £40m are hard to substantiate. A more realistic figure for the specific costs of the investigation and prosecution would be nearer £20m, according to SFO sources.

Equally understandably, the defendants in their relief overlooked the payments that four of the companies have made to the NHS totalling at least £34.5m in order to settle civil cartel claims – without admitting liability, of course. Those payments almost certainly would not have been made without the SFO prosecution.

THE SFO annual report contains a glowing reference to assistant director John Benstead, "our new diversity champion" who "approached this role with enthusiasm and made a very positive impact". This was followed by tables showing the SFO's PC achievements in the diversity of its staff, if not the prosecution of

☛ *See over...*

THE DIRECTORS

DREDGE & RIGG

AT LEAST GORDON BROWN ISN'T A COMMUNIST ANYMORE.
BUSINESS
ISN'T HE?
THEN WHY DOES HE WANT THE WHOLE BRITISH ECONOMY NATIONALISED BY THE CHINESE?
BUSINESS
ZTZ.

fraud. Sadly, Benstead was not there to read this glowing tribute. He was among the five assistant directors who left last month following Grey Man's arrival.

WHILE pondering the prospect of paying out billions over Equitable Life for "a decade of regulatory failure", the Treasury may be about to receive a final cheque from the legacy of Barlow Clowes – where a similar failure also resulted in Ombudsman-forced compensation to investors costing £150m when the company collapsed 20 years ago.

Peter Henwood, who ran a company management business in the Isle of Man and was accused of dishonestly assisting the disposal of money stolen from Barlow Clowes International by others, is understood to be negotiating a deal with the BCI liquidators under which he would pay up to £6.75m to settle the £10m-plus interest judgment they have against him.

This follows an appeal court ruling in May which overturned a decision a year ago that Henwood was not domiciled in the UK at the time he was served with a bankruptcy petition and therefore was offshore home free. The liquidators had initially obtained the judgment against Henwood in 2000. This had been overturned but was then supported by the Privy Council in 2005. Henwood is said to be asking to make the payments over four years.

If the Treasury pays out over Equitable, will it pursue a similar recovery policy, and if so against whom? Equitable's claim against auditors Ernst & Young collapsed, although the beancounters' regulator, the Joint Disciplinary Scheme, has E&Y in its sights. A finding against the accountants is expected at the end of the year, together with a big fine, but both would be subject to appeal, which could delay the result into 2009. They and other Equitable advisers could be targets – particularly over the statutory returns on which the regulators relied – along with the directors.

But will the Treasury be up for that after the two-decade Barlow Clowes experience where, in the case of Henwood, it is likely that legal costs exceed the settlement – as was the case when the government sued Arthur Andersen over the DeLorean disaster?

STOCKBROKER Lewis Altman, who has died aged 90, was an "old school" market trader whom many on the old Stock Exchange Council loved to hate.

For years his firm, Lewis Altman & Co, with its coterie of colourful clients, irritated bigger rivals with its quick-off-the-mark and often rule-bending activities, especially among the mining and plantation remnants of Britain's Far East colonial past. Altman bought and sold stakes in many companies either to local Chinese interests or stock market operators looking for "shell" companies. He also supported the rights of women to be Stock Exchange members. His long-time partner, Anne Halle, was among the ten female members allowed to join in 1973.

However, Altman finally did a deal too far and became involved in the biggest ever prosecution brought over breaches of the old Exchange Control regulations relating to the generation of phony investment dollar premium repayments. The man behind the transactions, which cost the Treasury an estimated £2m, was ace currency speculator Judah Binstock, who lived in France and Spain and was never tried.

Altman always denied the charges but was convicted in 1978, fined £54,700 and expelled from the Stock Exchange after 30 years. The firm was fined £155,500 and went into liquidation. However, Altman continued in business outside the Stock Exchange until the tougher regulation of the early 90s.

After observing stock markets since the Depression, Altman had a simple but true explanation for gyrations in share prices such as we are seeing now: "Up in greed, down in fear".

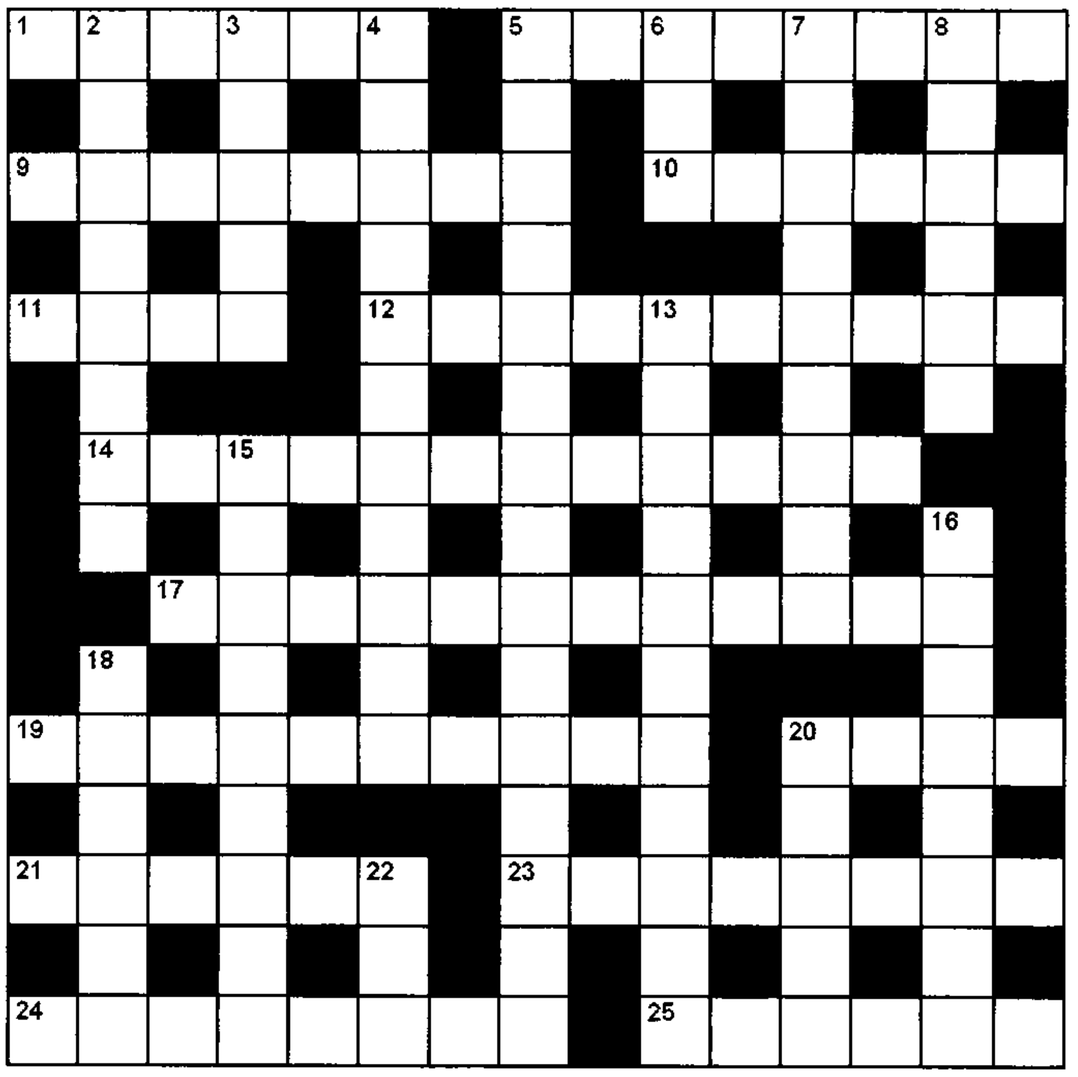
'Slicker

EYE CROSSWORD 370

by Cyclops

£100 prize to first correct solution opened on 1 August 2008

Entries to 'Crossword', Private Eye, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1D 3BN or via email to crossword@private-eye.co.uk



ACROSS

1 Ken's office, tops – cripes! About time to do some brown-nosing (6)
5 House's bribe to let Labour's leader off (8)
9 "Hard Core Kinky" involves tense Brenda as a bully (8)
10 Worthy of a double D, say, Hawking, if this? (6)
11 Bastard bloke abandoning vehicle on way to cemetery? (4)
12 Aristocrat, due to shakes, declared a loser (7,3)
14 Unloved professionals on the wane – drug condition has one going to the bog (6,6)
17 Standing union: berk element stirred resistance (4-8)
19 Numerable moves, involving *Anschluss* finally, demanded by Hitler's Germany (10)
20 Roger's bird (4)
21 Booze, where to get it, endless booze (6)
23 Buy Cherie's book? Don't be a nerd! (3,1,4)
24 English icon, way before Brown, the *not* New Labour politician? (2,6)
25 Conductor's arse let out (6)

DOWN

2 Cameron (no leader) screwed up – "Balls, possibly missing a member!" (3-5)
3 Tax man overcome by boob (5)
4 Lead nickers' tools (4-7)
5 A bum red with agitation by a metal instrument – enter it and disappear? (7,8)
6 Broadcaster Mark this c*** (3)
7 Unreliable as an arse constraining code breaking technique's debut (9)
8 Balls turn somersaults – doing a rock band thing? (2,4)
13 Indicator of how hot mother turned (got to see Brenda)? (11)
15 Gordon's number needed by FBI character and heads of east European state (9)
16 Pisspoor DEFRA dual reorganisation (answer lacking) (8)
18 He picks flies ... a bit of heavy breathing ... gets penetrated by bloke (6)
20 Lib-Dem's leader opens gob, causing division (5)
22 A scumbag 'e's off to sort out (3)

Crossword 369 winner: JOHN McKENZIE

ACROSS: 8 Clara 10 Overheard 11 Rangoon 12 Y-fronts 13 In the know 16/25 Bride-to-be 17 Funny Old World 21 Rebus 23 The Mirror 24 Beckett 26 Opus Dei 28 Beelzebub 29 Right.

DOWN: 1 Scorpio 2 Jacobean 3 Down and out 4 Levy 5 Cherub 6 Painkiller 7 Odyssey 9/15 Ann Widdecombe 14 Thumbscrew 18 Obituary 19 Crybaby 20 Frailty 22 Sleaze 27 Dog.

Yobs
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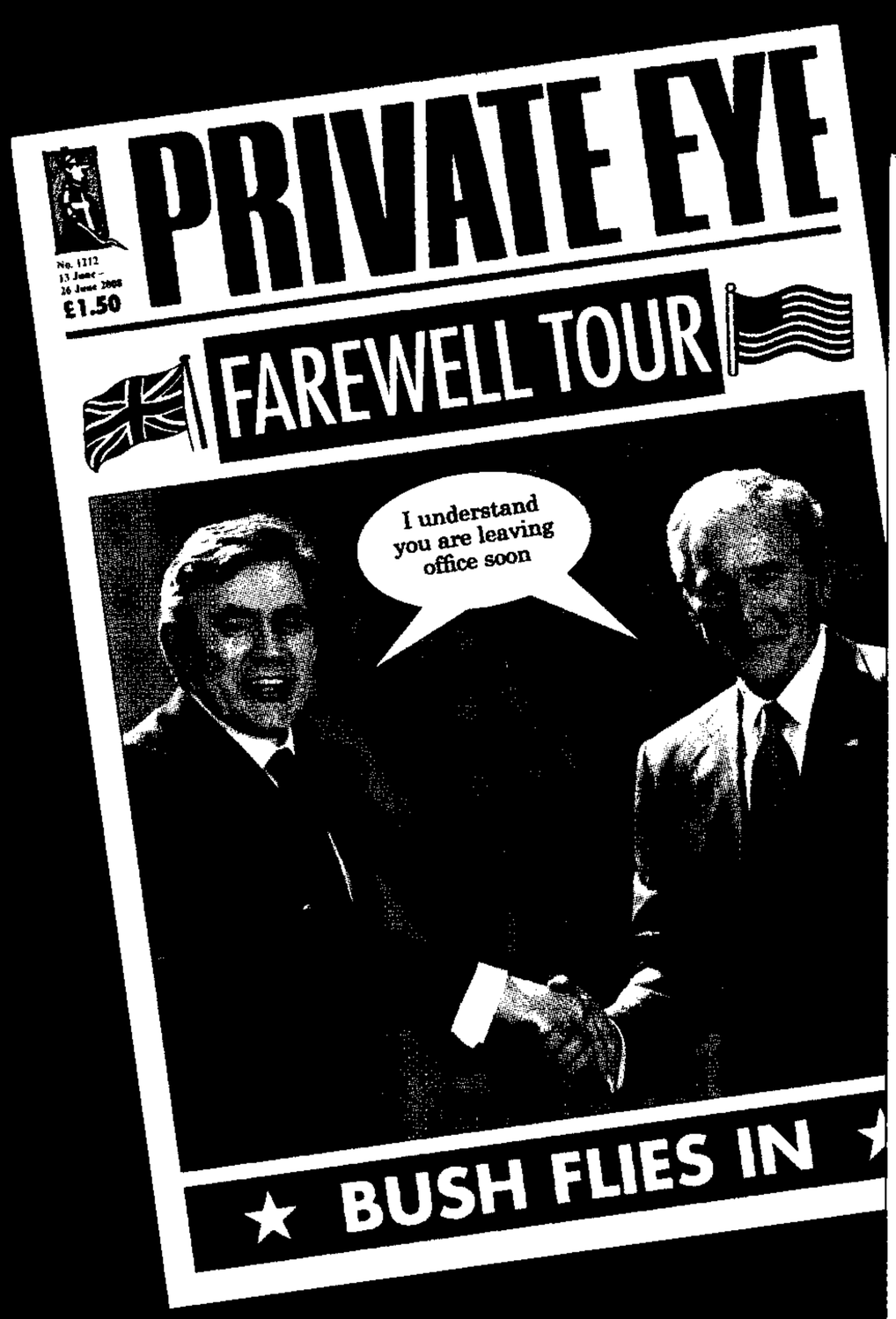

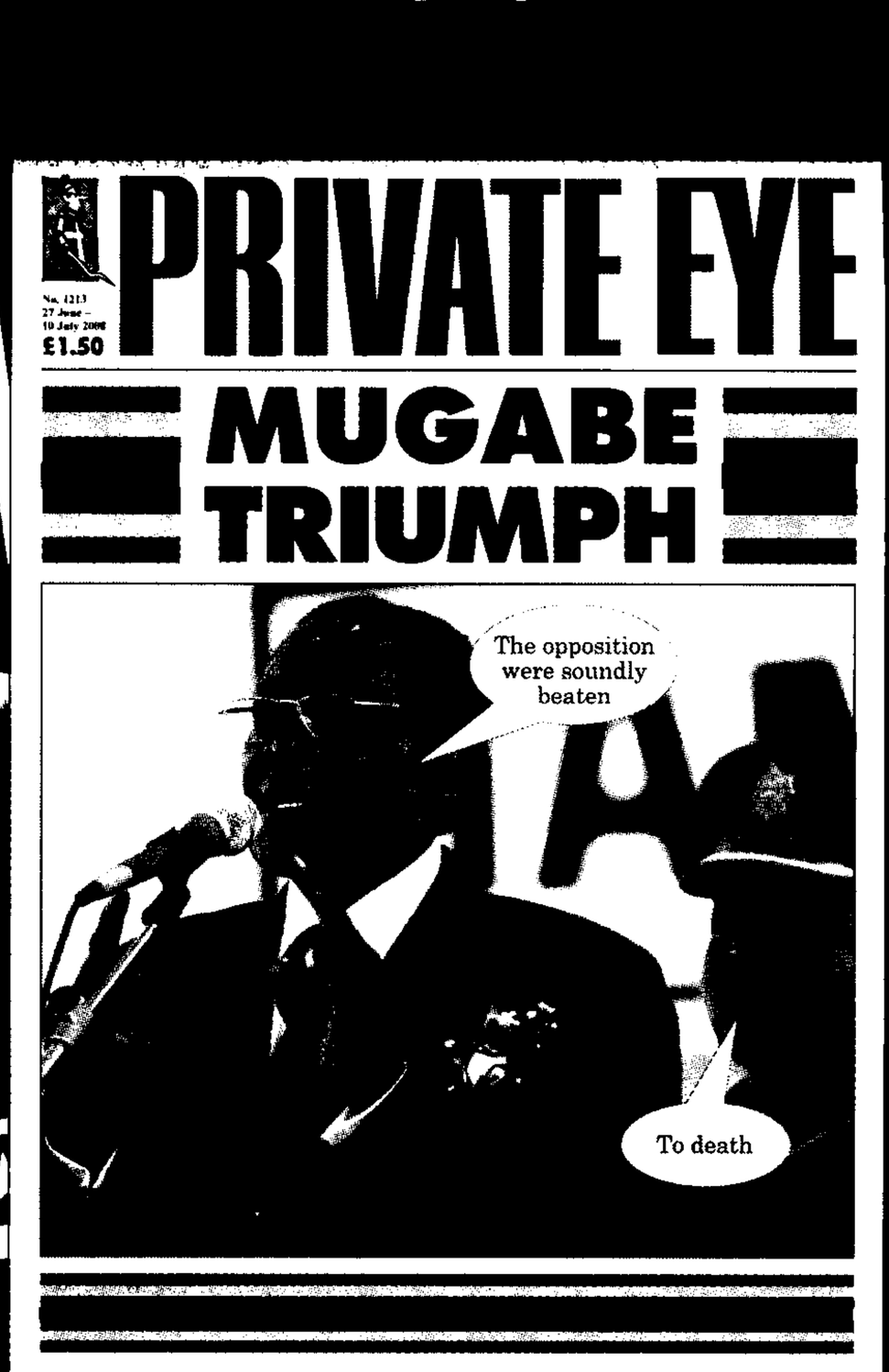

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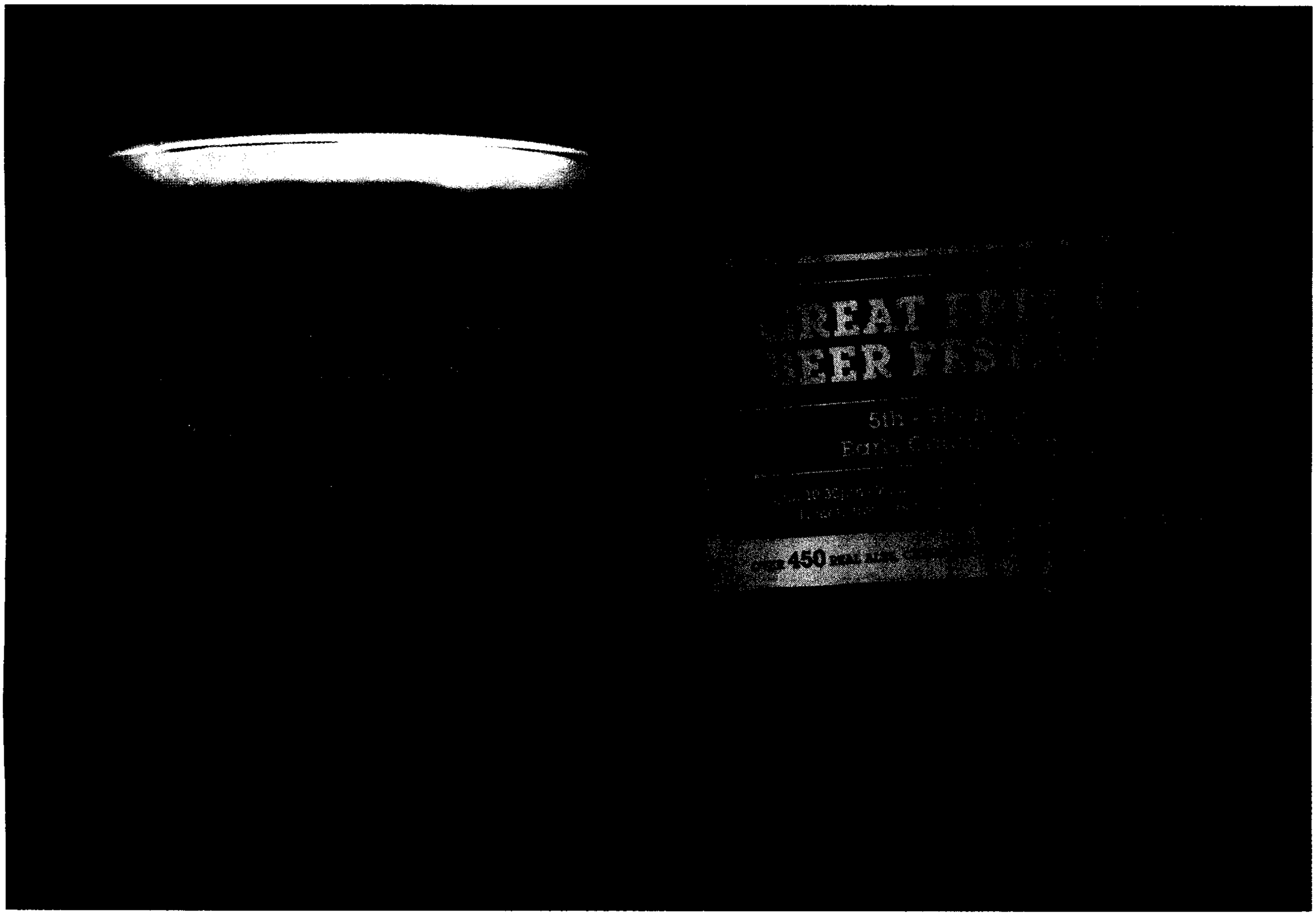

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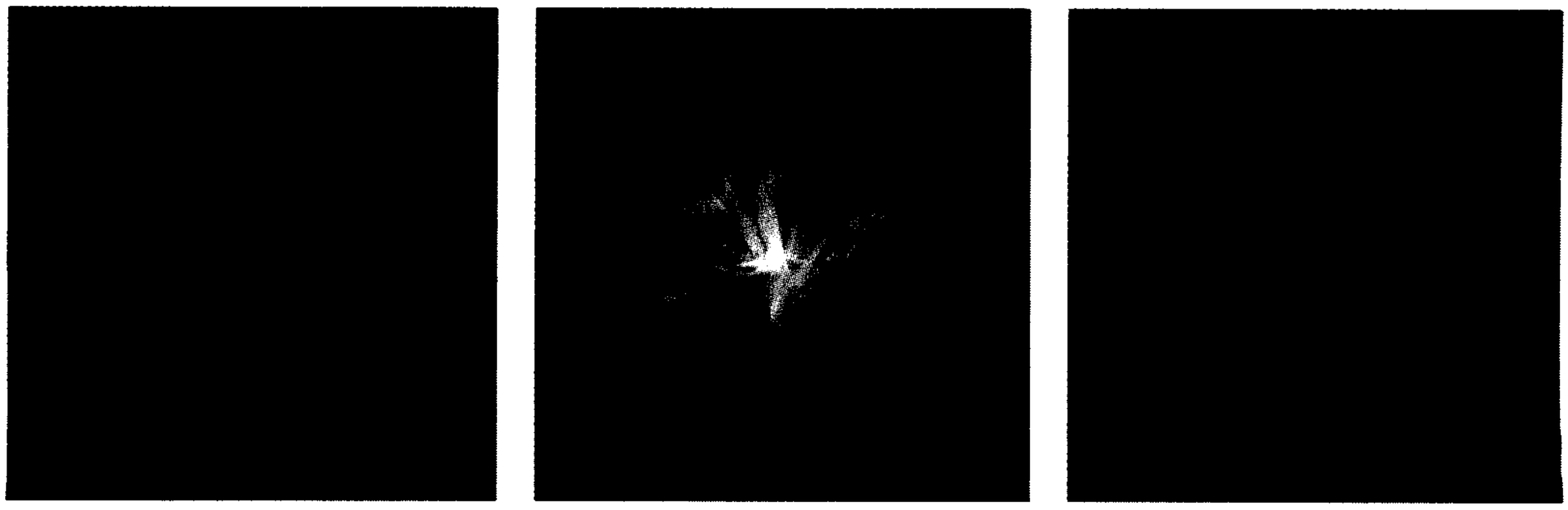

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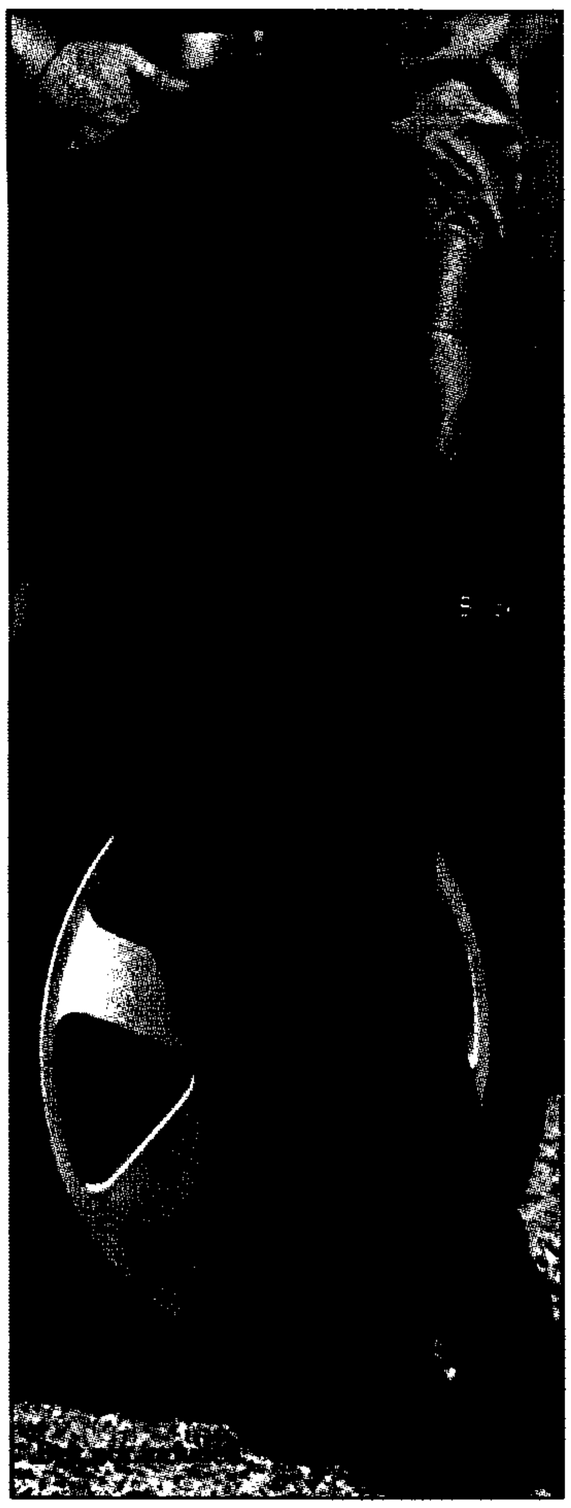

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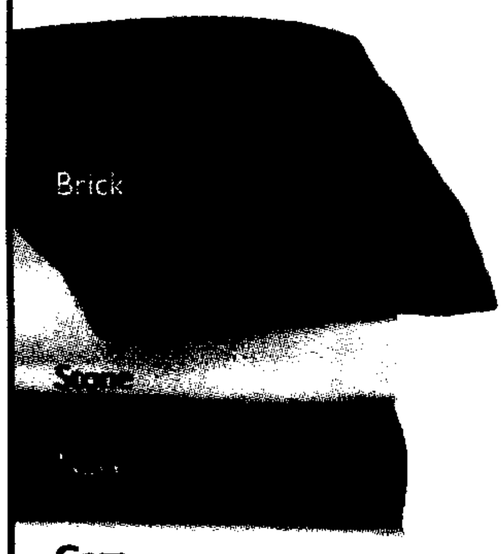

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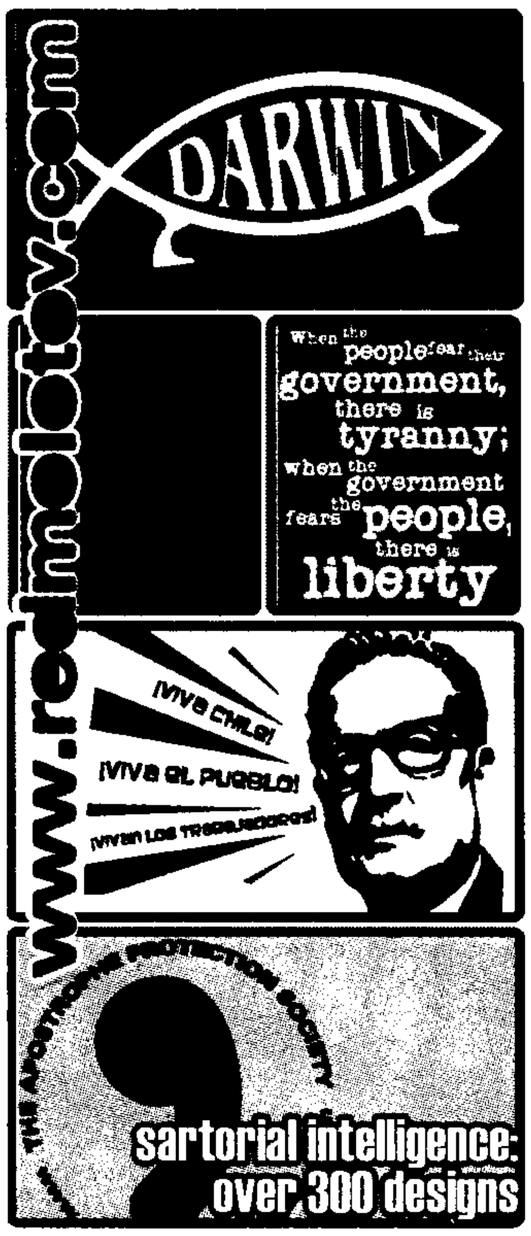
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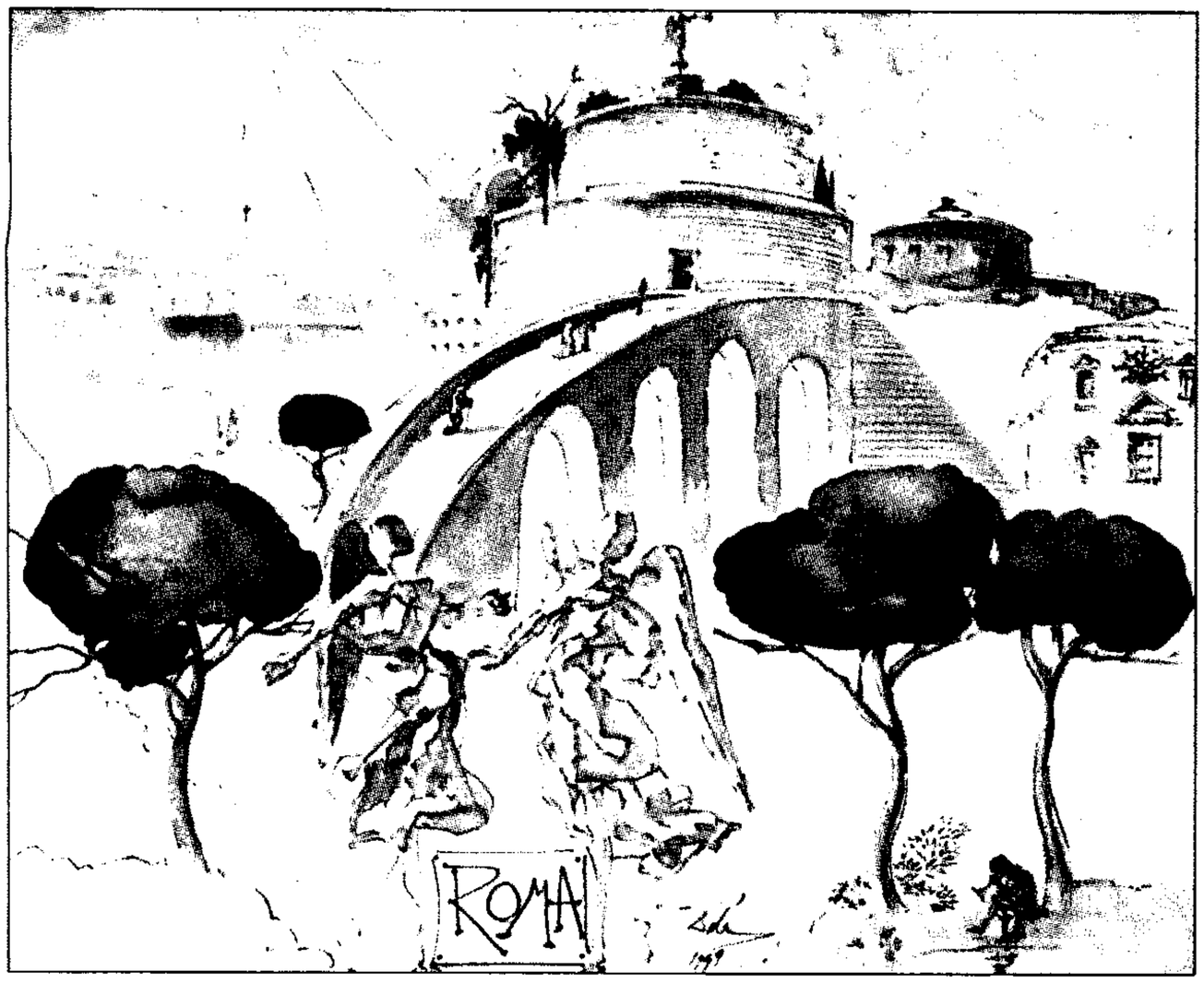

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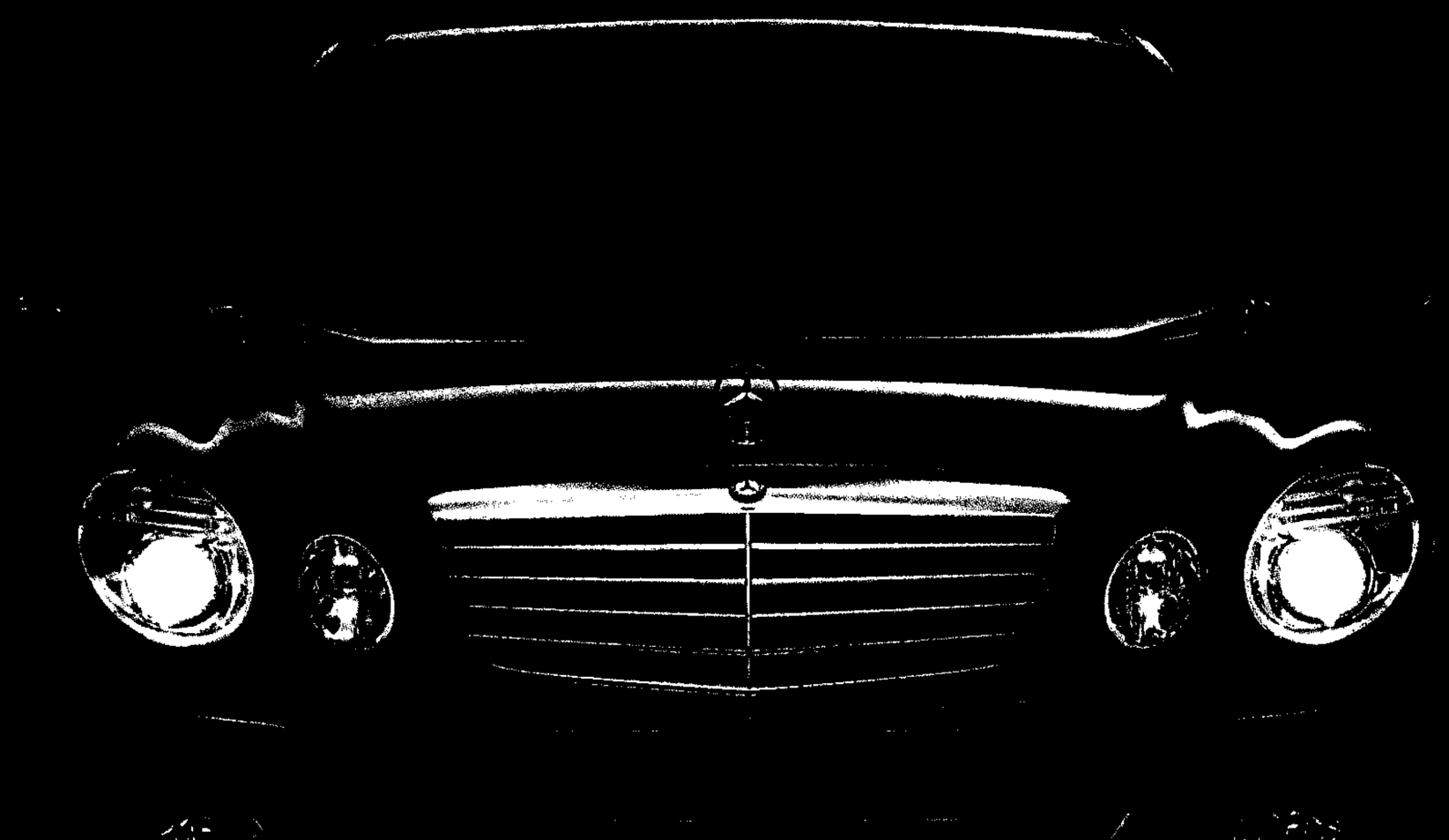

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